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**FORGED EGYPTIAN
ANTIQUITIES**

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A BLUE CANOPIC JAR, WITH ANUBIS HEAD.

This is an imitation of porcelain and shows very well the unevenness of the modern glaze. Such jars were used to contain the internal organs of the dead and were placed in the tomb beside the mummy.

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

BY

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ETC.



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PREFATORY NOTE

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Plates I, II, XII and XVI were prepared from water-colour drawings made by Miss Enid Stoddard, but all of the others have been reproduced direct from the objects themselves.

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FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THERE are a great many people in the world who are interested in Egypt, in its antiquities, and in the unfolding of its pages of ancient history; a number collect specimens of old Egyptian art, such as scarabs, pottery, small statues, &c., and others, when in Egypt, buy them as presents for friends at home.

It is for this numerous class, which is year by year defrauded of large sums of money by the plausible sellers of forged antiquities, that this book has been written, for most of them, sooner or later, find out to their dismay that that which they had thought was a genuine relic of ancient days, and prized accordingly, is nothing more nor less than a clever fraud, and, from a collector's point of view, worthless. The Egyptologist,

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museum authority, and expert collector may be safely left to take care of themselves ; a perusal of the following pages might even prove interesting to them, although it is exceedingly unlikely that the book contains anything new so far as they are concerned.

The selling of spurious Egyptian antiquities is not confined to Egypt alone. London, New York, Paris, and even Algiers, are also the hunting-ground of the makers of imitations, who often make large sums of money by imposing upon those who do not possess the knowledge requisite to detect the fraud.

It is interesting to analyse the frame of mind of the people who have been cheated. As a rule, they are angry, but they are extremely careful to keep their feelings to themselves. If you inquire, they pooh-pooh the transaction as one of little moment, and pass it over, although, as I shall presently show, many pounds may have been lost. But if the conversation is not changed, and you wait patiently, you will presently find that under the carefully repressed annoy-

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ance runs a vein of genuine regret that the nice-spoken, honest-looking and plausible Hassan or Mohammed had cheated them.

The subsequent history of the fraudulent antiquity is often interesting. As a rule, it is packed up and taken home, to be presented in due course to some friend with the cautious remark that "perhaps it is genuine." Then some day an unfortunate Egyptologist is brought face to face with it, and he has to make his escape as best he may, with a certain loss of reputation. I have heard a hostess remark sarcastically that she did not know what post was held by her victim in the Antiquities Department in Egypt, but it certainly did not require a clever man to see that hers was an important antiquity.

There is no more trying moment in an Egyptologist's life than when, after a good dinner, while he is feeling at peace with all the world, a charming hostess brings out an antiquity for him to pass judgment upon. I have seen men literally squirm, and many are the subterfuges employed by them to

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avoid giving an opinion. Woe betide the unhappy expert if a mischievous friend happens to be there who will lead their hostess on to ask questions, and who will assure her, despite mute appeals, that her victim is an expert in the particular branch to which her statue or jar, as it may be, belongs. And when the Egyptologist is cornered, and huffily declares to be a forgery the object upon which he is asked to pass judgment, the lady is, as a rule, angry or hurt; and then it is that the mischievous friend saves the situation by murmuring, "How shocking that these Egyptologists should be so jealous!" The straw is caught, the hostess smiles again, and peace is restored, while the unfortunate man from Egypt, vowing vengeance, makes his escape.

If a buyer of some specimen wishes an expert opinion upon his purchase, he usually lays a deep plan. Perhaps he knows a man connected with the museum, whose opinion is worth having; or, if not, he gets some one to introduce him. Then, one day, in a casual off-hand kind of way, he produces

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his specimen, and explains that he did not buy it as a "real thing, you know," but it seemed very clever, and he did not pay much for it. Inquiries as to how much has been paid are met by "regrets that he has forgotten—it was so unimportant." Most probably it was pounds, but the buyer will seldom or never tell you.

The expert groans, but cannot escape. The clever ones temporise, and tell tales of the marvellous cleverness of the forgers, and explain that it is almost impossible to distinguish some forgeries from genuine antiquities. Then come other stories of how such and such a one was taken in, and names are mentioned which stand high in the list of savants. It is assumed by the expert that his friend will never mention the matter. Then he expresses the opinion that it would be very difficult to be certain in the case of the specimen under consideration, that he himself would not like to say definitely, "and you know, my dear fellow, it has become almost impossible to tell, for these things are made by the descendants of the

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men who made the originals." So the friendship is preserved, and the subject drifts away into the safe region of "perhaps and if."

It does not seem to occur to the general public that so great has been the demand for antiquities on the part of foreign museums, private collectors, and learned societies all over the world that the supply may threaten to give out ; that the districts in which the relics lie are carefully watched ; and that the Cairo museum is a jealous guardian. So important are the links between the past and the present times that stringent laws have been passed against unauthorised persons taking genuine and important relics out of the country. Moreover, the enormous numbers of antiquities sold yearly would require extensive expeditions to supply the demand, and few of the finds are obtained surreptitiously.

In fact, since the above was written, an even more stringent law has been passed by the Egyptian Government, which took effect on July 1, 1912. Under this law all finds of

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examples of the Arts, Sciences, Literature, Religions, Customs, Industries, &c., will belong to the State. The definition of the term Antiquities is most comprehensive, and covers every possible find.

All dealers will now require to have a licence, the export of antiquities is quite prohibited unless by special permit from the department responsible, and any attempt to evade this law will be followed by the confiscation of the objects.

Any one discovering antiquities must notify the Antiquities Department at once; should the articles found be of a movable nature the finder will receive half the objects discovered or their value in money.

A licence from the Ministry of Public Works, issued with the consent of the Director of the Antiquities Department, must be obtained before any excavation may be undertaken.

This new law is sure to give a great impetus to the manufacture of forged Egyptian antiquities.

There is indeed a great fascination in

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possessing jewels, beads, necklaces, vases, and statues belonging to a people who lived thousands of years ago, but it is obvious that there must be a limit to the quantity available. As the supply becomes less, so the prices rise; for the demand does not fall off, and to-day £30 or £40 will be paid for a specimen which, a few years ago, would hardly have brought in as many shillings. The intrinsic value of these antiquities is very little. They are prized for their association with the past and as evidences of the advanced state of culture existing in those far-off days.

The love of money has always been a marked characteristic of the Egyptian, and here the ingenuity of the descendant of the old craftsman asserts itself. There is no doubt that he has, from time to time, been assisted by various Europeans, but he is producing replicas of antiquities, scarabs, figures, models, so cleverly cut and made that it puzzles many of the best experts to say whether they are false or real. Some of these imitations are sold for very high

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prices. If the discovery of a fraud is made in time, part of the money will sometimes be refunded.

The Egyptian forger would not consider that he had done anything particularly dishonest in deceiving a man in that kind of way. His only regret would be that the fraud had been discovered, and he would muse upon the unfairness of Fate, for here he had been with a fortune within his grasp, only to lose it.

Such cases are seldom brought before the courts, for there seems to be a tacit understanding between the buyer and seller whereby each accepts his own risk.

Think for a moment what such a transaction means to the Egyptian. Supposing he got £3000 for certain objects and made £2500 clear profit: that would mean at least twenty feddans of land, probably more. These should bring him, if he lets them out for hire, over £200 a year; or, if he farmed them himself, £600 or £700 a year. It is a perfect craze with the Egyptians to get rich, and perhaps our forger has been earning

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a precarious living for years, receiving in pay the equivalent of a shilling or two a day. He has always kept in mind the possibility of making a coup such as I have described. He has worked hard and cultivated a plausible manner and learned English with this single object in view. If he is successful, and the fraud is not discovered until too late, he will occupy a high position in his village and will live happily, but always with the hope of making a further haul.

To such a pitch has the art of manufacturing imitations been carried that I propose to give a few of the more common examples, and here I may say that the morality of dealing in antiquities resembles, to a great extent, that involved in the buying and selling of horses. If you go to a respectable and responsible dealer, you pay more, but you are sure either to get a genuine article or to have your money returned if things go wrong. But if you go to a horse coper, you buy at your own risk.

CHAPTER II

GOLD ORNAMENTS

THE making of copies of ancient gold ornaments has been going on for some years, and is one of the most lucrative branches of the business. The most extraordinary prices are sometimes paid for these replicas in the full belief that they are genuine.

A gentleman who is deeply interested in the study of Egyptology was once approached by a native, who, after some conversation, hinted that he had some gold antiquities to sell. The interpreter, who was evidently "in the swim," pretended to have the utmost difficulty in persuading the native that he might speak freely, assuring him that he was quite safe—the gentleman would not inform against him—and that he could with perfect confidence bring his spoils to be looked at. This at last he agreed to do.

Excitement grew, and at the hour the

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man appeared—a stolid, clownish, apparently ignorant fellah; he seemed the last one to be suspected of a clever fraud.

The articles were various figures wrought in gold, and after a protracted interview, a bargain was struck. £3000 was paid for them, and then they were brought in triumph to Cairo, where I saw them. They were submitted to expert after expert, and then the truth came out. They were forgeries. Part of the money paid was returned, but the remainder was lost.

Another case occurred recently. A man from the Delta went to a dealer in Cairo and said that one of the farmers in his district had found some gold things in a tomb while taking soil from the ground, and now he wanted to find a rich man to buy them, one who would keep his secret so that the Government should not punish him and take them from him. When the dealer agreed to go and see them, the man advised him to take £200 or £300 with him. The dealer cautiously said, “No, I shall take only £20.” It was arranged that he should go to his informant’s

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village, and that the finder of the jewels should be brought to him there.

Next day the dealer went to the village, and found that his informant was out, collecting rents for his land, and some time elapsed before he came back, carrying in his hands an inkpot and some papers to show how busy he had been. The dealer asked where the farmer was who had found the antiquities. The man replied, "I have sent for him, but he has not yet come."

"Where does he live?" asked the dealer.

The man pointed to a collection of huts in the distance behind a ruin.

"Come, let us take donkeys and ride there," said the dealer, "I cannot stay here all day."

Donkeys were procured and they set off. On arrival, they found the farmer working his land. When he came in answer to their call he refused to admit that he had ever seen any gold antiquities, and vowed that he had none. When pressed, he swore by all the Prophets and their beards that he was innocent of finding anything; but, in

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an aside, he muttered that he thought the dealer was a member of the secret police, who had come to take all he had got.

Then the dealer swore to him by all the most sacred oaths that he was not a member of the police force, so the old man took courage, and produced one piece—a leaf of gold with two oxen engaged in a fight stamped upon it. The dealer asked if this was all. The farmer replied, “Well, you buy this, and when I know how you value it I will go and get you another.”

Then the dealer, doubting if the specimen was really genuine, asked the farmer if he had found it, or whether any one had given it to him to sell. The man swore by the divorce—the *talak bi talata*—that he had found the things himself, and had dug them up out of the ground.

The dealer thereupon bought some stamped leaves of gold to the value of £30, and the farmer told him to come again in two days and perhaps he would show him some more. Then the man who had lured the dealer there said, “Oh, I have seen in

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this man's house a gold sword and a gold belt, and lots of coins, and if you can get five thousand pounds you can buy them from him."

When the dealer got back to Cairo with his purchases, he showed them to an authority on the subject, who offered to buy them for £250, but the dealer refused, saying that he wished to wait until he could buy the rest of the find. Then the prospective purchaser said that, as he had not time to wait, he would ask a friend to come and buy for him.

The friend came and in the end bought the gold leaves for £250, and asked the dealer to go and get the rest of the things. Thinking that he was going to make a good season's work, the dealer took £300 with him and went back to the place. This was, in itself, a risky proceeding, as he might have been murdered and the money stolen; needless to say, he did not sleep that night.

The intermediary entered into an agreement with the dealer that he would take no money for introducing him to the finder,

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but would accept a commission on the profits made when the articles were sold.

“I will send for the man to come,” he declared, “because people will see us going to his house, and they will become suspicious and inform the authorities, who will put the man in prison or punish him in some way. Stay here, my friend. It is better so. I will send for the farmer to come.”

“But when will he come?” asked the dealer.

“In the night, when it is dark,” replied the intermediary.

The dealer waited and waited, and between his fear of being killed and robbed, and his anxiety to get more things, he had no sleep. Each time the door opened—and it opened many times—he sat up and asked if the man had come.

The reply was always, “No, not yet.”

In the early morning the dealer became suspicious and said, “Well, I must go home now, I cannot wait any longer.”

The intermediary said, “Yes, you go home, and if the man brings anything I

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will come over to your shop and bring them with me."

After two days he came alone, bringing a gold ring with a Greek head upon it, and asked the dealer for £10 in order to buy some more things from the farmer, who had grown suspicious and would not disclose what else he had. The dealer gave the money, and after two days the intermediary returned, this time with two gold coins, some more rings and stamped gold foil, and saying positively that they were from the same tomb.

So the dealer bought the coins, rings, and some of the other things for £80. He took them to an expert authority, who said, "This is excellent, for now we shall know from the date on the coins the age of the relics."

A stamp in wax was taken, and sent at once to the museum.

"May I show this coin to a friend?" asked the expert. The dealer gladly gave permission, and it was taken to a collector of coins, who told them that that particular

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coin was never found in Egypt, and, most probably, it was not genuine.

Then the dealer said, "Well, if this coin is not real, then all the things which I have bought are frauds; let us examine all of them."

This was done, and after three hours' hard work with magnifying glasses, the expert came to the conclusion that the articles were not really genuine antiquities, but very clever frauds. Then the dealer returned the £250 to his patron who had bought the gold leaves. After this he took the things straight back to the intermediary, who now declined all responsibility, saying, "You bought from the farmer, who is an ignorant man and knows nothing."

The assistance of the police was invoked, and the head of the village paid £20 to the dealer, intending to reimburse himself from the proceeds of the farmer's crops.

In the meantime, the dealer was not idle. He found out that a Jewish goldsmith in Cairo had prepared some plain gold leaves and had sent them over to Athens to be

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stamped. He had then sold them to the intermediary, and this man had passed them on to the fellah, and between them they had made this plan. They buried the things in the ground, and after a time the fellah dug them up, thus being able to swear by the "triple divorce" that he had taken them out of the ground. Then the intermediary had looked about him for a promising victim, and selected the dealer, who lost over the transaction some £60. Some time later, the forgeries were again sold to a well-known man for £30, and were again detected. This time the money in full was returned, and the forgeries were melted down.

One night, thirteen years ago, while I was strolling about in the moonlight after dinner, an Arab came up, and after some conversation slipped a small parcel into my hand, made a sign of silence, and went away. I knew the man, so, after a few minutes, I made an excuse and went indoors to look at the parcel, which was rather heavy

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and of a peculiar shape. After undoing the knotted ends of a piece of native cloth, there came into view a magnificent pair of gold bracelets made in the form of snakes, with three rings of heavy gold. The make was antique and the design splendid. I was young at the game then, and the beauty of the bracelets made them attractive. I hesitated for a time, and the more I hesitated the less I liked the idea of buying them. I could not be sure that they were real, and an expert opinion could not, under the circumstances, be got, to say nothing of the questionable morality of buying them and thereby encouraging riflers of tombs and stealers of important links between the present and ancient days. For who can say what valuable pieces of evidence may not, in this way, be lost ?

I wrapped them up again in their dirty cloth and went out into the moonlight once more. Soon the Arab sidled up to me, and I put the parcel back into his hand.

“ You will buy them ? ” he queried.

“ What is your price ? ” I asked.

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“Thirty pounds,” he replied. “They are worth a hundred and fifty.”

I told him it was a lot of money. He shrugged his shoulders, and held up his hands as if to show me that he was positively giving them to me. Then I definitely declined to buy them.

And now, after thirteen years have passed, I hear that they were afterwards sold for the price of the gold plus a quarter for the antique design. Old Egyptian gold is 24 carat, and an English sovereign is 18 carat, so that the price came out at about the price of ordinary gold. And one of those implicated in the transaction has since admitted to me that the bracelets were forgeries.

Last year I was shown by a collector a small gold scarab. It was quite hollow and made of very thin gold, and it had the appearance of having been pressed out in a mould. I was asked to give an opinion on it, but was able to escape without committing myself. My opinion was that the scarab

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was not genuine, but as it was the first example of its kind that I had seen, I did not care to express too definite an opinion upon the subject. This year I have seen other gold ornaments bought at the same place, and I have no hesitation in saying that the scarab was an exceedingly well-made copy of a genuine one.

In Plate II are shown some interesting forged gold antiques. The necklace (No. 2) was bought by a lady in Algiers. It was represented to have been brought from Egypt, and was said to be composed of Egyptian scarabs made of precious stones and mounted in gold filigree work. The price paid for it was £16. Examination showed that the scarabs were composed of coloured glass, very badly cut, and the setting was merely silver gilt. The real value was under ten shillings.

No. 1 shows a combination necklace composed of genuine old carnelian beads and spurious gold bottles. This was a fashionable form of necklace in the ancient

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days, and the present specimen is extremely well calculated to take in the unwary. The price asked for it was £18. The man had two others of a somewhat different design with him. The prices were £12 and £6 respectively. In each case the beads were old, and the gold had been covered with a kind of lacquer which gave it the appearance of age. So clever were the gold imitations that at first I really thought that they were real, and proceeded to bargain for them. We did not agree upon a price for the two largest necklaces, but I bought the smaller one (No. 4) for twelve shillings.

No. 3 is a bracelet made up of imitation scarabs set in real gold of a low carat.

The seller also showed me a heavy gold ring, fashioned like the ring of Akhnaton, but lacking an inscription on the face of it. For this he asked £8, but I remembered a tale told me by an excavator to the effect that in December of 1900 a man of Qus took a gold ring to his camp at Derr-el-Ballas. On the face was the name of an eighteenth-dynasty queen. Careful exami-

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nation showed that the ring was a forgery. Four months later the excavator saw the same ring in the shop of a dealer in Luxor, who had paid £5 for it, and this made me cautious. The following day the man returned with a friend, and again we proceeded to bargain for the two large necklaces. Hamid Ibrahim, to whom I am much indebted for his assistance, and in whose shop the transaction was taking place, was suspicious and uneasy. Time after time he examined the necklaces with a powerful magnifying glass. The men watched him calmly, never showing by the quiver of an eyelid that they minded his examining them as much as he liked. We had narrowed the transaction down until now there was little separating us in price, when again Ibrahim took up the bottle necklace, and began looking at it with his glass. Suddenly he made a quick movement which I understood at once, and then he laid the necklace down. Silently he handed me the glass, and pointed out a bottle. I took up the necklace, and there on the bottle he had



NECKLACES AND A BRACELET.

1. A necklace composed of genuine old carnelian beads, with spurious gold bottles.
2. Part of a necklace made of silver-gilt nigree work, with coloured glass scarabs bought in Algiers.
3. A bracelet made up of imitation scarabs set in gold of a low carat.
4. A string of genuine old carnelian and spurious gold beads.

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indicated, was a very fine line where the gold had been folded over. I handed the necklace back to Ibrahim, who took a needle and ran it along underneath the edge of the gold, which he thus turned back. Then we saw that it was no thicker than a sheet of thin paper, while the bottles had been cast in plaster of Paris, and the gold foil very cleverly folded over them. I did not buy the necklaces, but I obtained the loan of one of them (No. 2, Plate II).

As I have said, the men made no objection to our examination of the bottles. They looked us frankly in the face; they would have cheated us if they could, but they had failed. They did not consider that they were in any way to blame for their attempt. They told us frankly, after we had found them out, that the gold forgeries were all made by one man, who was such a wonderful artist that he had been offered a high rate of pay to go to Europe to work there, but that he had refused. It is certain that more will be heard of this man's work, for, said my informant, "There is no one in the

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world so clever as he is in making gold imitations.”

I have purposely refrained from describing the gold forgeries made and sold by Europeans in Egypt, preferring to keep entirely to the Egyptians and their work.

CHAPTER III

LAPIS LAZULI FIGURES AND IRIDESCENT GLASS

GENUINE lapis lazuli figures are extremely rare, and generally small, the most valuable ones in the museums being only a few inches high. It was thought at first that it would be impossible to make imitations which would pass for the real stone, but on the demand arising it has been met.

I was riding from Deir-el-Bahari down to the river one day when a youth rose up from the side of the road, and shuffled forward to speak to me.

“ You buy antīcas ? ” he said in a whisper, casting a sidelong glance of apprehension at a mounted policeman who was following at about seventy yards distance.

I told him to show me what he had, whereupon he produced a blue bowl of earthenware with a pattern of the lotus flower on it. Porcelain, he called it, “ and

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very fine work, sir. I dig in the tombs, sir."

Now if there was one thing that this youthful Ananias did not do, it was to dig in the tombs. It is one of the worst offences in Egypt to dig and take away antiquities without permission. This constitutes a crime not to be expiated without years of imprisonment in the Tourah stone quarries.

The price of the blue bowl was £3. This at once betrayed it, for no one knows better than these sellers of antiquities the value of the genuine article. £20 or more would not have bought it, had he really dug it up out of a tomb. When I declined to buy the bowl, he produced various fragments of alabaster vessels which were genuine enough, and then some odd Ushebti figures, genuine but very poor in make and colour, and not worth the trouble of taking home. When these were declined, he still ran alongside of my donkey for perhaps half a mile, from time to time casting hunted looks at the mounted policeman not very far away. Presently he cast an agonised look at me

LAPIS LAZULI FIGURES

and made a sound indicative of silence ; then he produced a statue bound up in old rags, thrust it on my saddle in front of me, and with exceedingly well-acted fright, implored me not to let the policeman see it. Our conversation was carried on in Arabic, so that he knew well that I lived in the country, and yet he looked me straight in the face, and with his hand on his heart, lied.

I unrolled the rags, and there was a wonderful statue of Horus, about six inches high, beautifully moulded, in what was apparently lapis lazuli, with most natural cracks and fissures running through the substance. It was the first time I had met with this particular imitation, and for a moment I was dumfounded. I thrust the statue under my coat, and turned to look at our friend, the policeman. He was still at the same distance away, watching us, but the smile had broadened on his face, and this gave the whole thing away. He had evidently witnessed the same play a dozen times before,

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and perhaps a dozen people had thrust that statue under their coats, and turned to look at him ; so that he knew at once the stage which the negotiations had reached. Sometimes the young man would bring off the coup, when, no doubt, they would celebrate the occasion in a manner which would recompense the policeman for his non-interference.

“ How much ? ” I asked.

“ Thirty pounds,” was his reply.

“ But it is very dear,” I objected, “ and it does not seem to be a genuine antiquity.”

“ By the Prophet,” swore the boy, “ I dug it up myself in the tombs. Please, gentleman, do not let the policeman see.”

His intense anxiety was well acted. I looked at the statue again. It was the work of an artist, made in glass, with all the characteristics of the precious stone, and then sand-blasted to give it the appearance of age. Its value, had it been genuine, would have been many hundreds of pounds. Its actual value was a few shillings. Then we

LAPIS LAZULI FIGURES

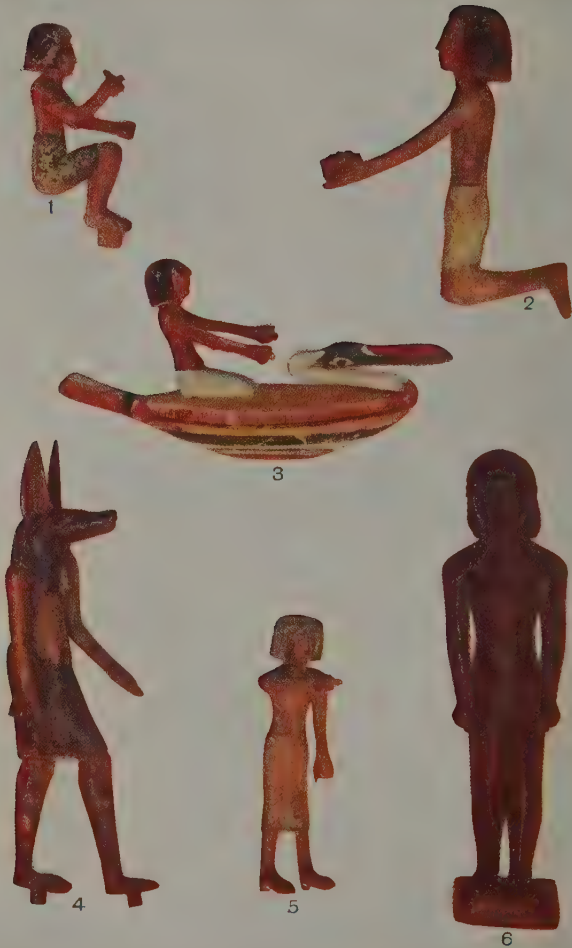
proceeded to bargain. I could have bought the figure for £3, but lower than that he would not come down; so I wrapped the statue up, and gave it back to him. Again he tried to sell me the blue bowl, offering this time to take ten shillings for it. When I said that I had no change, he produced a bag with a considerable quantity of gold and silver in it, and extracted an English half-sovereign. His perseverance was so marked that in the end I bought a few imitations, so that he might not have had his long run for nothing.

On returning to Luxor, I found in a shop a large head of Horus in blue, apparently lapis lazuli. It was in a glass case, and was evidently considered to be very valuable. I asked to see it, and inquired from the dealer what it was. He, decent old fellow, smiled, and, turning his hands upwards, mentioned the name of a well-known Egyptologist, connected with the museum, and said, "He says perhaps it is lapis lazuli." As a matter of fact, it was glass imitation.

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

At the last Agricultural Show in Cairo, there were several stalls for the sale of antiquities. At one of these I was shown Hathor, the sacred cow, and the figure of a man. The price asked was £40 for the cow, and £30 for the figure of a man. They were both wrapped up in pieces of old rag, and only brought out after I had seen most of the antiquities on the stall. After informing the man that I knew they were only glass imitations, I tried to buy the figures, but it was impossible to get them for a reasonable sum. The lowest amount he would accept for the cow was £8, and £4 for the man.

Later on, an itinerant vendor offered to sell me the figure shown in Plate X. No. 4. When we had agreed that it was imitation, and made of glass, I asked him to name a price. The lowest that he would take was £3. I was somewhat puzzled by the consistent high prices asked even for a fraud which had been detected, and after a great deal of argument, the man indignantly informed me that some men from America



WOODEN USHEBTI FIGURES.
Made at Gurna.

LAPIS LAZULI FIGURES

come each year to Cairo, at the end of the season, and purchase these blue glass figures for sums ranging between £3 and £7. They take them back to America, where they are sold for very high prices—my informant mentioned £50 and £100 each. This would quite explain why they refused to sell them to me at their intrinsic value.

There is a very considerable market for old iridescent glass. A small bottle will fetch from £1 to £3, and good specimens from £2 to £8. There is a moderate quantity of these bottles found in a district called Rakah. The bottles are extremely fragile, but good specimens are very beautiful objects and find quick buyers. There is a demand, and the ingenuity of the Egyptian is keenly exercised to meet it. Imitations are being made by pouring a chemical on the inside and the outside of specially made thin bottles and glasses. This forms a film which gives an appearance of iridescence; but in many cases the film can be detached

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

with the point of a knife, and thus the fraud is made palpable.

One day a youth brought an iridescent bottle for me to buy, and as I happened to be out he sat down in the sun and waited. Upon my return he came up and began to explain that he had brought a beautiful bottle to sell to me, but had sat upon it and smashed it. Now he would sell it to me very cheap. Bottles made of iridescent glass are very thin, and the fragments were quite useless, but day after day the boy haunted the place, wanting to sell me the broken bottle "very cheap." I much regretted the unfortunate accident, for the bottle, though small, had been of perfect shape and beautiful colour. At last I offered to buy another should he have one for sale, but he walked sullenly away and never came back.

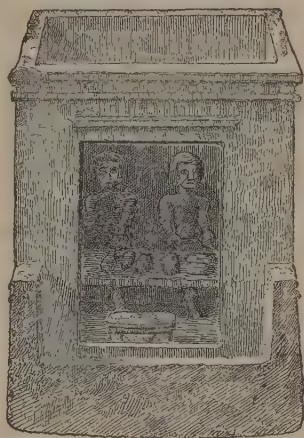
CHAPTER IV

FIGURES IN WOOD

It was the custom in the ancient days to place small statuettes made of wood, stone, porcelain or composition in the tombs. These were supposed to do the work of the dead in the Under-world, and are called ushebti, funerary figures, or answerers, because they were expected to answer the call made on the name of the dead, and to stand in their place.

Nos. 1, 2 and 5 of

Plate III are very cleverly carved, then dipped in liquid plaster of Paris, allowed to dry, and coloured to represent the ancient models. All these figures are made by a



Model of a funerary chamber ;
view of interior

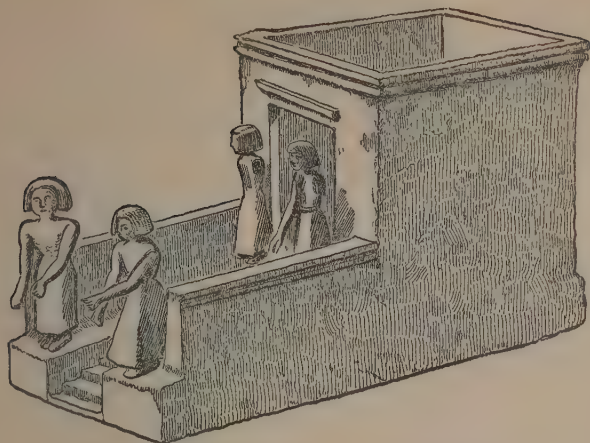
FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

man who lives at Gurna. I expressed to him the desire to have a figure in a boat. Three days after he returned, bringing with him the object in the centre (No. 3), which he called a dahabeyah, that he had made in the interval.

This man could never understand how it was that I was able to detect his forgeries, and time after time he asked me to tell him. He would look up with a sort of admiration and say, "Nothing is hid from his Excellency. He knows everything, even the mind of his servant." Later on, when I told him that the smell of the wood of which the figures were made was new, and not old, he looked me straight in the face without changing countenance and exclaimed, "Allah kerim ! [God is merciful.] I said well that nothing was hid from his Excellency. If he does not see that which is false with his eyes, he smells it with his nose." Then he clasped his hands together, as if there was nothing more to be said or done, and shortly after took his leave.

About a week later, my servant told me that "the man belonging to the antiquities "

FIGURES IN WOOD



Model of funerary chamber ; complete objects

was waiting to see me. It was my friend again, and he said, "This time I have an antiquity of the highest value." We proceeded to a room to examine it, and there he produced a bundle of paper which he began to unroll ; and as he neared the end, a most appalling stink arose, a curious, penetrating, abominable odour. I drew back while he finished the unwrapping, and presently he held up the wooden figure of Anubis (Plate III, No. 4). It was extremely light, and evidently made of mummy-case

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

wood, which is occasionally used for these wooden figures. But the smell was so awful that I quickly pushed it as far as possible away from me. All the time the man watched my face without the flicker of a smile on his own.

“It is indeed an antica,” he assured me.

“I have my doubts on that point,” I replied.

“Then will not the gentleman apply his test and smell it?” asked my friend, with the ghost of a smile on his face.

No, the gentleman would not smell it. The odour pervaded the whole room as it was, and I verily believe the old scoundrel had boiled down a piece of mummy and painted the statue with the liquid, either to hide the smell of the new wood, or to play off a joke upon me. Finally I bought the thing for three shillings, although he had asked £14 for it; but I had to cover it all over with varnish to seal up the smell before I could keep it in my room. For that reason it appears rather more shiny than the other figures.

FIGURES IN WOOD

Plate III, No. 6 represents a Nubian of an early dynasty. There is a cartouche and an inscription on the base. It stood in the window of a shop in Luxor in company with several other wooden figures. The dealer told me a long story about his brother having died, and how he had taken over the antiquities belonging to him, and was selling them at a very cheap rate. The man assured me that the statue was a genuine antiquity, but I had my doubts about it. Our bargaining was not a long process, and I bought it for a small sum. As I went out of the shop, the man said "I hope you will have good luck with the antīca," which at once told me what I had already suspected, that it was indeed a fraud. And yet it is cleverly made. The nose has been rubbed down to flatten it after the manner of the ancient statues. The back is beautifully moulded, and the splitting of the wood very cleverly done, but the sculptor had not taken the pains with his work that the ancient Egyptians were accustomed to do. The ears are badly

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

shaped and the hair should have stood up a little further from the forehead. The legs are too short, the ancient Egyptian Statues being remarkable for small heads, broad



Horus Hawk

shoulders, fineness about the hips, and long powerful limbs. The feet are badly moulded, and not up to the standard of ancient work. The cartouche on the base is poorly cut, and in the inscription on the side one of the letters is placed upside down.

The removal of a small piece of wood with a knife showed it to be deeply stained, but underneath the staining the wood was white. The most important test, however, for wooden reproductions is the smell of the wood.

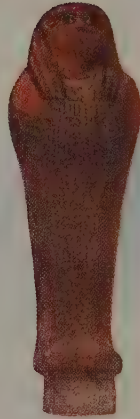
The hawk here represented is about one foot in height, carved out of wood and



1



2



3



4



5



6

FUNERARY FIGURES IN WOOD AND PLASTER.

FIGURES IN WOOD

painted. The wings are a dull green and the breast and back a light brown, with a decoration upon the back. As a rule these figures have a crown above the head, but in this specimen it had been broken off. These figures are frequently to be met with in the Mousky.

Plate IV contains some other funerary figures. No. 1 is a composition figure, part of which is old and part new. The white foot of the statue is new, while the remainder is old.



Bes

The head and chest have been repainted.

Made of soft white composition and painted black

No. 5 represents a small mummy figure, and is composed of old rags covered with plaster of Paris, and painted. The red paint used on the figure is correct, but the artist has made the mistake of using Prussian blue. The use of this colour was not known until the eighteenth century, therefore it could not have been in use in ancient times. The red is derived from

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

the oxide of iron found in the desert. On the front and also on the back of the figure there is a passage from the Book of the Dead. The modelling is good, but the use of the Prussian blue gives it entirely



Figure of a
Nubian, made
of slate

away. Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 6 represent also the funerary figures which used to be placed in the tombs to do the work of the deceased in the Underworld. The specimens shown are made from pieces of old mummy cases so as to give them the appearance of age.

The plough in No. 2, Plate V, is a very clever imitation. The shaft is long and exactly proportioned, and the end takes the form of the head of a snake. There is a ridge a quarter of the way down the shaft, to which was evidently attached the collar of the oxen. The model was made, then dipped in liquid plaster and faintly coloured a reddish-brown. The artist made the mistake of tying the pieces together with modern

FIGURES IN WOOD

string instead of using raw hide thongs as the ancient Egyptians did. On the end is a figure representing Min, the god of the harvest.

All the wooden figures in the illustrations are made by the man at Gurna, who told me with many a chuckle that he had sold one plough for £4 to an eminent Egyptologist, and that he had obtained £2 for another model from the representative of a foreign museum.

Plate V, No. 1 represents a paint-box of the early dynasties ; it is made of new wood, covered with plaster, and coloured. On the top of this has been applied some size, and then some rough dirt has been thrown over it while still wet. There is a long slit for rush brushes, and three holes for the colouring material, one of which contains some colour. Its companion, No. 4, is light, and made of old wood dipped in plaster, then covered with size and cleverly coloured reddish-brown in places with bars of deep green round it. Two knobs, one for opening the lid, and the other for holding the case,

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

are to be noted. It contains four wooden sticks for writing. There are four holes, each containing a small amount of colouring material.

As already mentioned, there is a way of detecting these forgeries. In addition to the smell of the new wood there is the sour odour of the size with which the artist covers them before sprinkling them artistically with various dusts. In the case of the boxes, they are too short and the sticks are wrong; they should have been rushes or very thin reeds teased out at one end and made into a brush. It was owing to the use of these rush or reed brushes that the letters of the ancient writings were usually made in the same way.

No. 3 of the same plate shows a reproduction of a dove, in wood, the colouring copied from an original.

CHAPTER V

STONE FIGURES

ONE day an up-river man offered for sale some small stone figures, and told me that he had others. I appointed a day to see them at Ibrahim's shop. The man, accompanied by a friend, came in before I arrived there, and showed them to Ibrahim, to whom he swore by Allah that they were genuine antiquities, and well worth buying. Failing in his attempt to get Ibrahim to buy them, he asked his help to persuade me to do so, offering him a commission out of what I should pay for them. Ibrahim, in order to lead him on, said he would do his best.

When I arrived, a few poor specimens of worthless antiquities were taken out of the many receptacles which these men have about their clothes. These were put aside in silence, as unworthy of consideration. Then there was a pause.

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

“What else have you?” I asked.

One by one the things were brought out, until all the objects shown on Plate VI were lying before us.

The stone head (No. 1) is composed of green basalt. It is supposed to represent a royal personage, possibly Akhnaton. It is peculiar in that the eyes show a distinct oriental tilt. The sculpture is poor, the ears badly made, the uræus—the sign of royalty—is cut in, instead of being raised, as in all the old examples of sculpture, and the sculptor has not placed the centre of the uræus in a line with the nose. These are mistakes of which the ancient sculptor would hardly have been guilty.

The second head (No. 3) shows a different tilt of the eyes. The work is by the same man, is also in green basalt, and is no better done.

After the heads were finished they were dipped in a kind of thin plaster, and then buried in a manure heap, where they remained for a time. The price asked was £1 each, and I eventually bought them for 3s. each.

STONE FIGURES

No. 2 shows a bottle of steatite. This was made in two halves, one of which broke. The fragments were embedded in a soft cement and moulded to correspond with the other side, and then coloured. This is a favourite way of faking various bowls or bottles. I have had small granite bowls offered to me, one part of which was whole, but the remainder was composed of small fragments embedded in a coloured wax, so soft that you could indent it with your nail. In addition to this it had the smell of wax.

Plate VI, No. 4 represents a ushebti figure, bearing the cartouche of Thothmes III, and a passage from the Book of the Dead. It is composed of ordinary Nile mud, and made in a mould. It was then taken out and left to dry, and later on blackened over a charcoal fire. In many of the houses in the vicinity of Gurna and Deir-el-Bahari, in a little hole above the door, or in some other convenient place, these statues may be seen, lying in their roughened condition, just as they have been taken out of the mould.

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

The price paid for this was one piastre, or twopence halfpenny. Many hundreds of these figures are sold all over Egypt during the season, and many a museum, no doubt, considers itself enriched by the possession of what is nothing more than a very crude modern model of a funerary figure.

No. 5 represents a woman with a wig. She should not have been represented carrying cylinders in her hands. The maker has mixed two periods, the predominating one being probably the twelfth dynasty.

No. 6 is composed of serpentine, and represents the work of about the twelfth dynasty, and possesses the dolichocephalic features of the skull which, according to Elliot Smith, are characteristic of the ancient Egyptian race. This, however, is not apparent in the illustration. Generally speaking, the artist has not quite conformed to the Egyptian style. The ancient sculpture at all periods acquired its distinctive features from being produced in conformity with a canon. As everything was done by rule, there was an absolute certainty that



WOODEN ARTICLES.

Representing objects found in the tombs.

1 & 4. Paint boxes.

2. A model of a plough.

3. A dove.

STONE FIGURES

each article of the period would have the distinguishing marks of this rule upon it, and that no stroke of the chisel, however rough or hastily applied, would be tentative. The effect would be produced rapidly and surely, and the amount of labour expended upon these statues would have produced a greater amount of detailed modelling.

Plate VI, No. 7, is a copy of a ushebti of the nineteenth dynasty, made of soluble composition, probably plaster of Paris, with a weight inside, and representing basalt. The materials are very fine, and hold tightly together. It was roughly modelled first, then trimmed and cut. The maker has observed ancient modelling sufficiently to make the ears large, but he has not carried his observation to the point of studying by what conventional strokes of the chisel the details of the ears and the features of the face were produced. All Egyptian features were produced by conventional means with hardly any variety. The tools were held and the strokes made in the same

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

manner, or the same effect could not be arrived at.

A favourite price with these men is £40, and this is what the man asked for the first figure he brought out ; £20 for the mummy figure, and £10 for the other. I offered £1 for the three. On hearing this he very scornfully packed them up again, and we proceeded to bargain for the smaller antiquities he had brought with him. Then the touch of the money in his palm seemed to quicken his desire for more. Quickly some black beads, a forged wooden paint-pot, alabaster pots, scarabs, and various other things changed hands for a shilling or two each. Then I prepared to go.

“ What you give for these ? ” demanded his companion, indicating the figures.

“ They are frauds, and useless,” I replied.

“ But you are well known. You buy new things.”

“ Yes, at a price.”

“ What you give then ? You say something.”

Eventually for £2 15s. I became owner

STONE FIGURES

of the statuettes and four other things, for which they had, in the first place, asked nearly £100.

A few years ago a large hotel was erected near Cairo, and Italian workmen were brought over to make scagliola, or imitation stone, for pillars, &c. There is no doubt that the Egyptians seized the opportunity to acquire further knowledge, which has been applied to the forging of antiquities.

The maker of these stone forgeries is an up-river man with a keen, clever face. The skin of his left hand is soft, but that of his right hand is much harder; the fingers and thumb of this hand are bent back, showing that they have been used for hard pressure. He informed me that he always copied from a genuine antiquity or from one of the ancient carvings upon a temple wall.

A collector was approached one day by a young man who offered some small objects for sale. These were worthless, colourless scarabs and sacred eyes. Some were real enough, but broken, and of no value. The

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

collector bought a few, and the man hinted at a statue, and gave certain vague particulars about it. A time was appointed, and in a hole in a room, which had been covered up by boards, the statue was seen, standing upright and at least two feet in height. It was taken out, and the collector examined it carefully. It seemed to be a splendid piece of work. The features were finely chiselled, and it was apparently the work of one of the best periods.

“Let me show it to the museum authorities,” said the collector. But the owner objected.

“No,” he said. “They will keep it, and send me to prison for having it.”

In the end a bargain was struck for £220, and the money paid. One day the collector showed it to a friend, who after some time made a remark which aroused the owner’s suspicions. He then sought the advice of an expert, who was extremely guarded in expressing his opinion. After a long and careful examination, however, he pronounced it a forgery.

STONE FIGURES

It is only fair to say that in this instance the money was returned. The seller was willing to do this rather than run the risk of a prosecution, which would give him a bad name, and possibly a long term of imprisonment.

I saw recently a forged granite statue which was of quite good workmanship, and another which had a fault, in that the face was turned ever so slightly to one side.

In Plate VII, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5 are supposed to represent the sons of Horus. They are made of bone and have some plaster sticking on the reverse side. Badly cut, they are not even correct in form, as the faces should be those of a man, a dog-faced ape, a jackal, and a hawk.

No. 3 is an Osiris figure of unusual form.

No. 6 shows a ram's head in red Aswan granite. This was the first example of forgery in granite that I had seen. The work is crude, and the features are not well brought out, but it is a remarkable example of the length to which these natives will go, and the trouble they will take in order to

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

impose upon the credulous and get money. There is no doubt that a large number of the Egyptians have learnt to work the harder kinds of stone while employed in building the Aswan Dam.



Sandstone Tablet and kneeling figure

No. 7 is a small stone hawk of incorrect shape.

No. 8 represents a frog cut in serpentine.

No. 9 is a crocodile made of slate. Part of the tail is lacking.

Nos. 10 and 11. Few people buy these as antiquities now. Their principal use seems to be that of paper-weights. They

STONE FIGURES

are made of plaster of Paris, and coloured. The price is about 1s. or less, but there is no doubt that some years ago they were freely sold as genuine anticas.

The figure on page 54 shows the statue of a kneeling man holding a tablet. It was said to have been taken out of a serdab, but the inscription has no meaning. The statue was some fifteen inches in height, and the maker had reproduced the old colours very cleverly.

The history of this tablet is somewhat curious. It was bought at Luxor for £50, and brought down to Cairo, where a doubt was cast upon its authenticity. A corner of the tablet was cut off with a saw, and it was found to be composed of sandstone. Eventually the owner became convinced that it was not a real antīca, and being unwilling to burden his luggage with so heavy a weight, gave it away. I found it standing in an out-of-the-way corner, with its face to the wall. It is an undoubted fraud.

On another occasion a Jewish collector of antiquities was approached by a Bedouin

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

who said that he had some things to sell. A day was arranged, and they proceeded to inspect the find. There was a large stone statue and some small, almost worthless articles. After long haggling, a price was agreed upon, £75 for the lot, apportioned in the following way. The small articles were priced by the Bedouin at £35, £30, and £5 respectively, leaving £5 only as the price of the statue.

The Arab seemed very stupid and it was hard to make him understand, but eventually the bargain was struck, and the relics were taken to the Jew's house. There photographs of the statue were taken, and sent to Paris and Berlin. After a time, the reply came back that the statue was an imitation.

The Jew made a great outcry, but the Bedouin, who no longer appeared stupid, pointed out that no question had been raised about the genuineness of the smaller objects, nor could there be, as they were real, and that only £5 had been paid for the statue. To show his good faith, he would return the £5



● STONE AND COMPOSITION FIGURES.

- 1 & 3. Heads cut in green basalt. 2. A bottle made of steatite.
 4. Ushebti figure made of Nile mud and blackened.
 5. Composition figure representing granite. 6. Statue made of serpentine.
 7. Statue made of plaster of Paris with a weight inside.

STONE FIGURES

and let the Jew keep the other anticas at the price he had paid for them, and this was eventually accepted.

Here is a curious story about another statue. There were two very clever men who lived in a village not far from the Great Pyramid. Both sold antiquities, but for some reason one was under the suspicion of the Government Department. A beautiful statue came into his possession, but he was afraid to offer it for sale himself, so he applied secretly to his *confrère* for assistance.

Shortly afterwards his people called me in to see him medically. At first sight the case was a perplexing one. There were no evidences of disease, and yet the man was sunk in a profound depression; he could not sleep, nor take any interest in the affairs of his family. He sat, sighing and silent, clasping and unclasping his fingers, day after day, surrounded by his sympathising men-friends, who smoked and drank coffee, as their custom is. The action of the heart got weaker and weaker, and his stomach would not "walk well," while he said that

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

he was very tired and thought he would like to die. One day I ordered all his friends out of the room, and then, after rolling out a verse of the Koran, asked him what it was that was taking "the blood from his heart" ?

At first he would not answer, but after I had pointed out to him that he was walking with his eyes open towards the tomb, where the angels Munker and Nakir would not be so gentle in questioning him as I had been, he gave way and told me the whole story.

He had bought a statue from some of the fellaheen who had dug it up out of their fields. They had been hard to deal with, but he had sat for days, threatening them with the police and the wrath of the Antiquities Department. In the end he had bought the statue for the price of a feddan of land. He was as innocent as milk of doing wrong things, but some *kelb* (dog) had told the Department of Antiquities lies, and now he could not conduct his business without fear. It was best to be honest, as he had always said, but what could one do with men whose breath poisoned

STONE FIGURES

the air around them ? Life was hard, and only fools went out of their way to seek for trouble. Therefore had he called in his neighbour to assist him in disposing of his treasure. His neighbour had taken the statue into his house, and in a week came an up-river man, who stayed there for a time. After many weeks, his neighbour had sent back a statue which was not the original, but a good copy, made by the man from up the river. Now, he could not take an action in the Courts to recover his statue, which was worth many hundreds of pounds, and meant, as the Pasha would understand, many acres of land, so "it is finished." Sorrowfully he rocked himself to and fro in the most abject misery as he told the tale, and looked appealingly at me for sympathy.

It was difficult to treat a man hit so hard as this man was. It was "his chance," which comes only once in a lifetime, and he had missed it. Bromides procured a little sleep, but the patient wasted away, and seemed not to want to live.

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

Then one day came some news. His neighbour had sold the statue to a museum in America for a large sum. It had been discovered to be a fraud, and had been returned; the money had had to be refunded, and the man had lost the cost of making the second statue, also his good name, and incurred sundry other expenses.

When the patient heard this, his eyes brightened forthwith. He got up from his bed, called for water, and ordered food to be prepared. Then he washed and prayed, and after that he ate a hearty meal.

Later I found that he had inspected his land, ordered alterations to his house, and given his wives extra money. I came across him in one of his fields, and he told me the news with many pious sayings. When we parted he clasped my hand warmly, saying, "Good-bye, oh Doctor Pasha. Allah kerim [God is merciful], and we are all his children; but, as my father said, it is always best to be honest."

CHAPTER VI

PORCELAIN FIGURES

USHEBTI figures in blue porcelain, of varying sizes, are now being made in Luxor, and I believe also in the Delta, near Zagazig. The modelling is good in some cases, and very bad in others, but the glaze is the wrong colour. The old Egyptian glaze was thin, and evenly distributed, while the new glaze is thicker in parts, patchy, and not quite the proper blue (*see* Frontispiece), but these faults will probably be rectified in a very short time.

The old Egyptian blue is commonly supposed to have been produced by grinding down turquoise, but there is no evidence that the Egyptians used these stones for such a purpose, although they mined turquoise in Sinai from prehistoric times.

Some time ago I came across a visitor and a friend sitting examining some specimens of Egyptian antiquities with a view

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

to purchase. The seller, an Arab, was squatting on the ground beside a small table, which was covered with various objects from scarabs to small statues. Near by were sitting two charming ladies, who watched the proceedings with much interest.

I came up in time to hear an offer of £20 for a small, but handsome, black statue of Isis with the infant Horus, and some blue ushebti figures. The goddess and her son were represented as being seated upon a kind of throne.

“You know about these things,” said the visitor to me. “Come and tell me what you think.”

Modestly disclaiming any special knowledge, I took a seat and examined the figures for which I had heard the offer of £20. The model of Isis and Horus was beautifully cut, and appeared to be made of polished diorite, but close examination showed that it was composed of plaster of Paris, coloured black, similar to the black scarab (No. 8 on Plate VIII). The three ushebti figures

PORCELAIN FIGURES

were also very suspicious, for the blue was not the right colour, and the glaze was too uneven to be the work of the old Egyptians. As I laid the figures down, the Arab, who knew me well, looked straight into my face. Not a feature moved, and his eyes were steady and expressionless. Then, pushing a tin box towards me, he said, "Here are some very good scarabs. Look at them."

"What do you think of the figures?" whispered the visitor.

At that moment Providence sent a wandering Egyptologist on the scene.

"Ah, here is the man who knows," was my reply. By careful shepherding, the expert was got across to the table, and comfortably settled in a chair. I saw an angry look come over his face when he caught sight of the specimens, and I very quietly withdrew. As I left I heard the visitor say, "Ah well, you wouldn't take my offer of twenty pounds, and now I shall retire from the business."

An hour later, the charming ladies who had watched the scene fell foul of me for

FORGED EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

having permitted an ignorant visitor to be robbed of twenty pounds for worthless frauds.

“Why, *we* could see that they were not genuine!” they cried.

“Then why didn’t you say so?” was my testy reply.

“It was not our business; he didn’t ask *us*,” they said scornfully. “But we heard him ask *you*, and you did not answer.”

Now, it was quite useless to explain that I had stopped the sale by bringing the Egyptologist into the affair. I was put down as “a mean thing,” and not forgiven for some time after. Nor was this all the misfortune that befell me, for later the Egyptologist said huffily, “Look here, when next your opinion is asked upon antiquities, spurious or otherwise, do the work yourself, and don’t bring *me* into it.”

Later, the visitor loftily denied that he had offered £20 for the figures. Then it was that the ladies partly forgave me, for they had heard the offer made.



STONE AND OTHER FIGURES.

- 1, 2, 4 & 5. The Sons of Horus, or the four genii, carved in bone.
 3. Osiris figure, also in bone. 6. Ram's head in red granite.
 7. Stone hawk. 8. Frog cut in serpentine.
 9. Crocodile made of slate.
 10 & 11. Sphinxes made of plaster, used as paper-weights.

PORCELAIN FIGURES

Recently a bronze statue was sent from the Oasis of Khargeh to a dealer in Cairo, with the statement that it had just been discovered there. The sum of £500 was asked for it. Curiously enough, on the dealer's shelf stood a reproduction of that particular statue. A comparison of the two showed that they were identical. The new piece was probably made by Italians and taken to the Oasis, where it was buried, and after a time dug up and sent to the dealer, who blandly refused to buy it.

Khargeh is an oasis in the Libyan Desert, lying more than one hundred miles to the west of the Nile. In the ancient days the Romans had an outpost there. Now it is the scene of the labours of a land company, and the Egyptian Government sometimes banishes habitual criminals and bad characters to this place.

On another occasion, when I was purchasing spurious antiquities, the seller produced a well-made statue of Isis with the infant Horus. It was cut in white stone, and

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the work was very good. He offered it to me for a low price, but I unfortunately tried to beat him down. At this he took umbrage, although he carefully concealed it from me. When I said that I would take the statue, he quietly pointed out to me that the price was £6, not 6s. Nor would he abate one piastre, but wrapping his statue up in some old rags, saluted me and went away. Later on I inquired from Ibrahim why it was that the man had become angry; his reply was, "These men are like that; sometimes they will sell you a thing cheaply and make no trouble over being beaten down; another time they will take offence, and though you may afterwards offer them their own price, yet they will not sell the thing to you, but will wrap it up and take it away."

CHAPTER VII

SCARABS

THIS is, perhaps, one of the most difficult chapters to write, for to such a pitch of perfection have the forgers brought their reproductions, that it is now extremely difficult for even well-known Egyptologists to give a definite statement concerning the genuineness or otherwise of a specimen submitted to them.

Some years ago the authorities at the Museum in Cairo would give their decision regarding antiquities shown to them by visitors, but now that is all changed, and they refuse to express an opinion. The Egyptians, however, still loudly protest that they are willing to have their scarabs submitted to the Museum authorities, knowing perfectly well that the experts there will give no opinion at all; but they hope that by so frankly and freely making this offer, the collector will take it for granted that the

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specimen is genuine, otherwise they would not be willing to take the risk of submitting it to such authorities.

From time to time the vendors make a *coup*, which, as there is a certain freemasonry amongst them, becomes known, and stimulates others to renewed efforts.

The novice in antiquities is extremely likely to be taken in, and should he show any disposition to buy, or express a wish to purchase, articles other than those shown to him, by some mysterious means the news goes round, and immediately there gather from all parts sellers of specimens both false and real. These men will never give each other away, but will back up the most lying assertions with surprising assurance mingled with the most childlike assumption of innocence. If found out, they will swear by their gods that it is you who are mistaken, not they. They will look you straight in the face while telling you the most barefaced untruths. This attitude they will carry to a great length and then suddenly break down, grin, and admit that the

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supposed antiquity is a fraud, but will deny any desire to cheat you. Later on they will make a special journey to see you again, bringing with them some more forgeries, fondly hoping that you may be induced to buy one of them.

The scarab, or replica of the sacred beetle of Egypt, was used as a seal, an amulet, or a charm, and was buried with the dead in large numbers, sometimes arranged in a certain form upon the mummy's chest. In the place of the heart there is frequently to be found a large scarab with sayings from the Book of the Dead inscribed upon it. It was supposed that the sacred beetle would ward off attacks of evil spirits, and give the dead a better chance of resting in peace in the other world. Sometimes a scarab would be inscribed with the records of an event, such as a voyage to Punt. Amenhotep III, in celebration of his marriage with Queen Ti, issued a large number of scarabs, carved in stone and engraved with a record of the event. (*Breasted.*)

The forgeries of scarabs are very numerous,

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and date back to remote periods. A few thousand years ago, it was not uncommon for a maker of charms to forge scarabs and amulets belonging to a king or a period long past, and sell them as the real article, for then, as now, the real antique had the greater value.

During the past few years, the making of forgeries has received a great impetus owing to the scarcity of the real articles, and the ever-increasing demand. Many are the humorous tales told about the difficult positions in which experts have found themselves, when suddenly confronted with palpable frauds and a demand for an expression of opinion.

A story is told of an expert who wished to play off a joke upon a very old and valued friend. So he fashioned two scarabs, and cut upon them the story of the circumnavigation of Africa. There is an ancient record that two scarabs were really in existence bearing inscriptions concerning this journey. It is said that Necho had them made during his lifetime and had the record

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of the journey cut upon them, but up to the present they have not been found. The expert intended to send those he had made round to his old friend as a birthday present, and the two would have laughed and chuckled together over the joke. Finally he put them away in his desk to await the proper time to send them, and then other matters claimed his attention so that he forgot all about them.

Some years later an illness came on, and he died. When his effects were disposed of, these scarabs were found and sold to a museum for £400. After a time they were discovered to be forgeries, and an action at law was brought in Europe. Despite the fact that the sellers pleaded ignorance and good faith, one was sentenced to imprisonment, not for fraud, but for the civil debt, owing to inability to refund the amount.

That the scarabs were imitation was first discovered by a grammatical error in the inscription, and this led to a closer examination of the material used, which proved to be lithographic stone.

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On another occasion, an excavator was being entertained by a very rich man. While smoking after dinner a number of scarabs were produced, and the excavator's opinion was asked as to their being genuine or not. £74 had been paid for them, and the excavator was obviously in a dilemma, for not one of them was genuine. He looked at them carefully, one by one, and then laid them down, saying that he would not like to express an opinion.

"Come," urged his host, "tell me what you think. I know you are an expert, and I want your opinion on them."

"Well, if you really want to know, they are all forgeries," said the expert grimly.

There was silence for a moment, and the host looked ruefully at the row of sacred beetles. Then, being a good sportsman, he said, "Don't say a word to the ladies. We will keep it to ourselves."

That gives the essence of the whole thing. The intrinsic value of a scarab is, perhaps, sixpence; the archæological value is whatever one likes to put upon them. And so



SCARABS AND AMULETS.

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cleverly are the forgeries made that people are just as happy with the imitations as they would be with the real articles, provided, of course, that they remain in blissful ignorance of the truth.

One day, a big hand was laid upon my shoulder, and a broad American voice chuckled in my ear, "Hello, Doc, fancy meeting you here." He was an old friend, and the meeting was a pleasant one. In answer to the question how he had come there, so far from his beloved New York, he answered :

"Wal, I just sort of blew in, wanted a change, and Wall Street not being what I call a business proposition at this moment, I thought I'd come. And now I'll just go up the Pyramid."

Later on he came back with a chastened mien.

"Well, how did you get on ? "

"Why, it was fine. The view ain't exactly like the Rocky Mountains scenery, but it was fine all the same. And I bought some sca-rabs."

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“ You didn’t ! Let me see them.”

As he fumbled about for three miserable little specimens, he explained how it came about.

“ You know that place, half-way up, where the stones jut out ? Wal, when we got there, them durned A-rabs stopped and said, ‘ Say, mister, this is the place where they buy sca-rabs.’ I looked down, and saw that it was a two hundred feet clean drop to the bottom, and I said that I thought it was, so I bought them.”

“ How much did you pay for them ? ”

“ Two dollars.”

“ Let me see them.”

Then he produced his scarabs.

“ They are forgeries,” was my remark.

“ That may be,” said my friend complacently, “ but it was a clean drop to the bottom from that durned stone, and I guess I am not hankering after eternal glory just now.”

Among the scarabs was one with the name of Khaf-Ra, the builder of the Second Pyramid (Plate VIII, No. 30) upon it. The

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workmanship is quite modern, and up to the present no contemporary scarabs have been found bearing Khaf-Ra's name. However, as he had only paid 8s. for them, he had not been very badly done.

A very large number of scarabs have been found which are made of composition material, or cut out of a piece of stone and left uncoloured. These fetch very small prices, although they may be the genuine articles, therefore the up-river men have taken to re-glazing them. They obtain pieces of old glaze from the ushebti figures and pieces of old glass and melt these down. But the re-glazed scarabs can usually be detected, even although the colour may be correct, by the irregularity of the glazing, and the fact that between the legs of the beetle the dirt can usually be seen under the glaze.

Sometimes the makers grind up these poor and broken scarabs and re-mould them. Then they re-glaze them, and swear to you by Allah that they are indeed old.

The natives oil antiquities to make them

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look polished or to enhance the colour. This method the forgers are applying now to their productions.

There is a man at Qus who is a most clever forger of gold jewellery, but he also does a good deal of work recutting scarabs. His procedure is to grind the inscription off the base of the original scarab, recut the cartouche, and re-glaze it. The scarabs can be detected by the thinness of the base plate, and by the peculiar manner in which the hawks are made, with a hump on the back, like the *Mut* vulture.

Most of the spurious scarabs were, until a year or two ago, made at Luxor, where one man in particular is an artist at the work. I have known him ask 8s. for one which he had just finished, and obstinately refuse to take less. "I am not like the fellaheen, who work for five piastres a day," he declared. "I do good work, and am going to be paid for it." He did not see any harm in what he was doing, nor did he try to keep his business secret, and he took a pride in turning out work

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which was very difficult to tell from the original.

It is curious in what out-of-the-way places these scarabs turn up. Recently, in a consulting-room in Harley Street, one was put before me and my opinion asked. It had been given to the physician by a grateful patient. I did not answer, but after a good look laid it down. "I thought so," said the doctor quietly, as he picked it up and slipped it into a drawer.

One of the most remarkable features of scarab buying is the number of people who will avoid respectable shops where the proprietors have a reputation to lose, on the score that they are too dear, and then pick up with some boy in the street who has a glib tongue and a plausible manner, and who brings out the inevitable tin box with a motley assortment of worthless odds and ends. Once let such a boy get an inkling of the fact that you mean to buy, and he will be back next day with a fresh lot of good-looking anticas. Where they come from is a mystery, but I suspect that there is a

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system of interchange between these men, and that they sell for one another and settle up afterwards.

I remember a lady who scornfully declined to buy from a respectable shop, and then found a boy who told her a long story of how he dug anticas up and sold them cheaper than other people. I know that she bought nearly £50 worth from him, but how much more I never heard. Later on, the buyer will to a certainty get a rude shock over some of her cherished possessions.

Amulets, or wishing scarabs, are frequently to be bought. The frauds can, as a rule, be told by their light weight and velvety feel, and by the crudeness of the work; but this last is not invariable, and every year the scarab forgers are producing a better article.

Walking along the river-front at Luxor one day, I was accosted by an old man who produced a rag in which was tied up a piece of old broken pottery. This was the lure, for upon my refusing to buy it, he took out a small object rolled up in pink paper. This

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turned out to be a fine specimen of a walking scarab. The colour was good, and the inscriptions were very fair, while the undercutting was extremely good.

But somehow I do not like antiquities which are taken out of a piece of pink paper, and I refused it. A German who had been for many years in the country came along and snapped it up. Later on he informed me that he had paid only one and a half dollars for it, and that it was worth £4 or £5. For a long time he held forth upon its beauties and its wonderful cutting, declaring that he had not seen so fine a specimen for years. I had another good look at it, and saw plainly enough that it was an imitation, so I left him to enjoy his purchase.

It must be clearly understood that the majority of the vendors of scarabs are far better judges of their value than any ordinary collector, and therefore a man, even though he be only an old and dirty individual, would be most unlikely to sell for a dollar and a half a scarab which was worth £4 or £5 ; and the natives usually take their

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finds first of all to dealers, who would certainly not let a good scarab pass them.

European makers have now entered the arena, and are competing with the natives as makers of antiquities, but so far the latter have had the best of it. The group of scarabs numbered 1 to 5, Plate VIII, are either German or Italian work. They are very good indeed, perhaps too good. I had to pay 18s. for those specimens, nor could Ibrahim get them for me any cheaper. But I have always felt that I was done.

Some weeks after the man from whom these were purchased came again with some more. I was busy and Ibrahim was away, so the matter was placed in the hands of his son, who was instructed to obtain some for my collection if possible. Later he handed me four, and on looking them over, I saw to my astonishment that one was real. I asked how this had happened.

"Yes," replied the youngster, "when I had picked out these four the man objected, and said that one was real. I looked at it with my father's glass, and then offered

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to bet him a sovereign that it was not. He then said that he did not know that I understood scarabs so well, and let me have the four for 8s." Later Ibrahim examined the scarab. "Yes," he said, "the scarab is genuine, and bears the name of Khonsu. It is worth at least £2. My son has done well. Now we are even, for the man charged too much for the other five; but my son must never offer to bet again, as he might lose my money."

Once, when in a great hurry, I was stopped by a young lady, who produced what looked like a damaged scarab, on which she asked my opinion. The light was very bad, and I had no time to spare, so I gave but a glance at the thing. She told me that she had found it at Abou Roash Pyramid. I wanted to be polite, and said that I thought it was a real scarab, but that it had by some chance been in the fire. She thanked me, and I hurried away. At dinner that night she told the story to a large and appreciative table, and handed the specimen round for

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the guests to see. She had made the thing with a penknife out of a piece of soft rock, and had coloured it with paint. I must admit that, when seen in a good light, the work was very rough, and that I ought not to have been taken in ; but let any one who thinks himself wiser be placed under similar circumstances and see what happens. I have found, too, that the female sex is very apt to lay traps for the unwary male, whenever he affects, rightly or wrongly, to possess a superior knowledge upon any subject.

Mr. Weigall, the author of "Life and Times of Akhnaton," told me that one day a lady showed him a scarab which she said she had bought from a little boy, who told her that he had stolen it from Weigall's excavations. She finished up her story by saying, "And I am sure it must be true, for he had such an honest little face."

Here is another scarab story. A friend was once in the Khan Khaleel bazaar in Cairo, and was approached by a young man in native dress who offered for sale a handful of scarabs. My friend, who is an expert and

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very well known, was considerably astonished at the man's impudence, for they were the common green scarabs made in great quantities at the present day to sell to the native women, and these are now being exported even as far as the Sudan. After a few pointed remarks, it seemed that the man was acting in good faith. He was very much taken aback by my friend's ridicule, and immediately ran off to a native who was dressed in European clothes and seated outside a shop about fifty paces away. A violent quarrel was started, the end of which my friend did not wait to see, but it was quite clear that the scarabs had been sold by the shopkeeper under some sort of guarantee that they were genuine antiquities.

In some cases scarabs are brought straight from the manufactory and placed upon the market. In other cases they are buried in dung-heaps to give them the odour of antiquity, then taken out, oiled and rubbed with dirt, which makes them look old and worn. Then the man will carry them about with him for a considerable time, and

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eventually they are ready to be offered to the unwary collector. To my own personal knowledge, experienced dealers in antiquities are being taken in frequently by these modern forgeries.

The following are a few of the defects which are to be noted in some of the specimens illustrated on Plate VIII.

The first five scarabs are of a turquoise blue colour, made of china, and most probably of European manufacture. The modelling is good, but the colour is unusual and too glossy.

No. 1 has a wish, "May you live for ever," cut upon its base.

No. 2 has a cartouche of Thothmes III. upon it.

No. 3 is very well cut. The inscription is a little uneven, but the only sign of imitation is that the glazing is too bright.

No. 4 has also the cartouche of Thothmes III. upon it, but is badly cut.

In No. 5 the pro-thorax of the beetle is out of proportion.

No. 6 is a small and very well-shaped

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scarab of a beautiful colour. The modelling is very good, and the maker has imitated the wear upon the old scarabs exceedingly well. He has run a very fine line of glaze between the wings and the thorax, but the features of the head are indicated by marks and not by cuttings. This is only to be seen with a magnifying glass. The above was bought for three piastres, but represents one of the most beautiful forged scarabs I have ever seen.

No. 7 is of good colour, but badly shaped. The inscription is fairly well cut, except that the serpents come out from the bottom of the cartouche instead of from the side, and the name of Thothmes III. is not clearly cut.

No. 8. This scarab is made of soft white composition, and painted black. The inscription, Ra-Men-Kheper, is beautifully cut, but unfortunately this does not show well in the illustration. The making of forged black scarabs is a new departure which has been seen for the first time this year. The price paid was 2s.

No. 9. The cutting and shape are not

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good. The lines on the back of the beetle are uneven, and the inscription is wrong. It is supposed to be "Horus of Lower Egypt," but the lotus is cut wrongly and should be more pointed at the bottom of the flower.

No. 10 is a scarab made from an old amethyst bead. The hole for the thread is from side to side, whereas in an old scarab it is from before backwards. There is no inscription on the base.

No. 11 is bad in every way—too thick and uneven in make, and the inscription has no meaning.

No. 12. The colour is too dark. The letters in the inscription are poorly made, but mean "Life and Truth for ever." The hole through the scarab is too narrow. The Egyptians did not possess a straight drill, therefore the holes made by them are slightly larger at one end than at the other.

No. 13 is an amulet, and supposed to be of the time of Usertsen in the twelfth dynasty. The name is correctly written, but the letters are not well cut.

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No. 14. This might be Rameses II., but it is not correctly cut. Both these amulets are of very soft composition, and for this reason can be easily recognised as imitations.

No. 15. In this case the inscription is incorrect and uneven.

Nos. 16, 17, 18 are made of carnelian, and are very poor, both as regards cutting and shape. They have no inscription.

No. 19. This is not the conventional way of making scarabs. The legs are too pronounced. The letters of the cartouche are badly cut, and the line across the bottom of the cartouche is too low down. The inscription on the base is meaningless, and the glazing is obviously new.

No. 20. The hare is badly cut and proportioned. The inscription is uneven.

No. 21. This is a beautifully-cut double scarab of very unusual form. I bought it from a boy in the streets of Cairo for three piastres. It is extremely well moulded, and the colour is very good. It had been oiled, and had what looked like ancient dirt on

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its back. Upon rubbing this dirt I found a speck of gold underneath. For some time opinions differed as to whether this was a genuine scarab which had been stolen and sold by a man who did not know its real value, or whether it was a very clever imitation. Examination of the base showed that there were two inscriptions, divided in half by an ankh (key of life). But one sign was upside down, and some of the symbols are longer and larger than those on the corresponding side. The front legs are too broad, and quite standing up. It must have been a very difficult matter for the imitator to produce this unusual specimen.

No. 22. This represents a frog, and is very poor work. It is made of composition, is insufficiently glazed, and the shape is bad.

No. 23. This was meant for a goat, and bears three cartouches on its back. The inscriptions are incorrectly cut. The features are absent, and the glaze has been put on after the break across the back was done.

No. 24. This is unevenly glazed, and

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the inscription is incorrect and uneven ; but the beetle is well shaped.

No. 25 is of good colour and shape, but rather thick. The inscription is of the time of Thothmes III., but the cartouche is unfinished, the serpents being only on one side of it, whereas they should be on both.

No. 26 is too thick, of a bad shape, and the cutting is poor. It is supposed to represent Horus.

No. 27 is of good colour, but the inscription is unevenly cut. It is supposed to represent Hathor, the goddess of beauty, love, and joy.

No. 28. This is made of old scarabs, which have been ground down and re-cast. For this reason the seller was able to swear the most sacred oath that it was real *antīca*. The cutting of the letters is too shallow.

No. 29 is well cut, a good blue, supposed to be Amenhotep, but the letters are not in proper order, and are meaningless.

No. 30. This scarab bears the name of Khaf-Ra, and the story about it has been

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told on pages 73 and 74. It is made of composition, and the glaze is thick on one side and has not adhered properly to the other ; but the scarab is well made.

No. 31 is a good colour, is made of stone, fairly cut, but the inscription has no meaning.

No. 32. This scarab bears the name of Rameses III. and has the inscription " The Governor of On " upon its base. The cutting is partly in high and partly in low relief. It is made of pottery and not quite correct in colour.

No. 33 is poor in make and cutting.

No. 34 is made of soft stone, fairly cut, but too pointed in shape. The inscription is not well done.

No. 35 is a bad colour, being a pale blue. The head is too large for a real beetle, and too flat ; the legs too thick. The inscription is not cut evenly, and does not mean anything.

No. 36 is a very good colour. The burnt mark on the head was caused in the firing. The cartouche is cut too low down.

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No. 37. A large stone scarab bearing the name of Thothmes III., incorrectly cut.

No. 38 is a blue decorative scarab, fairly well done.

No. 39 is a large beetle, bearing the cartouche of Thothmes III., but of a bad shape.

Some years ago, when crossing the Kasr-el-Nil bridge, a youth of the fellaheen class edged up to me and asked if I would purchase some seals. He said, "I have some very good ones." I asked to see them and he produced one. I knew very little about seals, but thought there was no harm in buying a few. In the end I spent 8*s.* upon them, and when I got home examined them carefully. Apparently some of them were made of carnelian and had the characteristic marks of the stone, though they were considerably weathered.

One does not show antiquities in the frank manner that is common to other hobbies, so I put one in my pocket, and placed the others away in a safe drawer. Some days went past, and then my oppor-

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tunity came. I was in the shop of a dealer noted for his keenness in detecting frauds, and after discussing various objects with him, I said, "Oh, I came across a seal the other day. Just look at it, will you?" and I casually passed it over the counter to him. He examined it carefully, and then a grim smile overspread his face. "How much did you pay for it?" "I paid 8s. for a lot," I replied. "Oh, well then, you need not grumble, for they did me out of as many pounds as you paid shillings," said the dealer. The seals were imitation, very cleverly made of glass, and rubbed with sand to produce the appearance of age.

ANCIENT PIGMENTS

Ancient pigments always show at some part the unfaded colour. There is no such thing as uniform degradation of colour. There should be no general appearance of decay. The ancient things were made of fresh material, and were preserved carefully.

Egyptian blue is composed of sand, copper oxide, and soda, mixed together, ground

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finely, then moistened with water, tied up in a tiny bag the size of a walnut, put into a furnace and heated to the temperature of red-hot copper. This must be done in a small furnace, and the temperature must not be carried too high, or an ordinary green glass will result. The temperature must be just enough to fuse the copper, soda, and silica into what is called a frit, that is, the stage which immediately precedes the fusion of the ingredients which would result in glass. The ball of frit is taken out and pulverised, mixed with glue or gum arabic, and used as a paint. The depth of colour decreases if the paint is ground too finely.

The green colour is either the natural green ore (malachite), or an oxide or artificial carbonate.

The purple colour is manganese oxide.

The red colour is simply earthy hæmatite or iron oxide.

The black colour is either carbon or black oxide of iron, or both mixed together, or the black oxide of manganese.

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The yellow is plain yellow ochre, sometimes mixed with a little white.

Grey is wood ash, mixed with lime white, or powdered gypsum.

Lime white is merely ordinary lime which has got stale or slacked.



A Winged Scarab and the four Genii

CHAPTER VIII

ALABASTER

ALABASTER jars were used in the old days to contain pigments, ointment, kohl, and similar commodities. They were also placed in large numbers in the graves, hence the quantity that comes into the market. The price is moderate, from a few shillings to several pounds, and one would hardly have thought it worth while for the forgers to copy them; yet it is now regularly done. But there is something about the old alabaster jar or pot which makes it somewhat easier to distinguish from forgeries than is the case with scarabs. In the old pots there are certain irregularities of make, a kind of lumpiness from the way in which they were cut out. The pots are thin and drilled out to the bottom with the bow drill, and the outsides are worn. Forgeries are made on the lathe, and are turned out regular in shape. They are thicker, heavier,

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and not drilled down to the bottom. The work on the interior is rough, and gives signs of having been hastily done. Some of the smaller pots are made in two halves, an upper and a lower, and joined by a cement about the middle. Sometimes old pots are recut or re-shaped, in order to give them a better appearance. The ones most difficult to tell from the originals are those made with the old bow-drill, for here comes in the slight irregularity of shape, and the work approaches much more nearly to that of the ancient Egyptians, as it is most probable that the originals were made in the same way.

Plate IX shows various kinds of alabaster pots, all of which are forgeries. Of recent years, a demand has arisen for heads carved out of alabaster. As it is quite certain that the value of these would be considerable, were they genuine antīcas, and the supply would be extremely small, the Egyptian has stepped in, and is endeavouring to supply the want after his fashion. Fig. 2 shows a head in alabaster. The style



ALABASTER.

1, 3, 4, 6 & 8. Kohl pots.
2. A head, Greek period.

5, 7 & 9. Vases.
10 & 11. Bowls.

ALABASTER

is of the Greek period. The workmanship is only fair, and carelessly done, the ears not having been formed at all. However, it represents a period when Egyptian Art was declining.

I remember an up-river man, who was employed on an excavation, picking up a piece of stone, and in his spare time fashioning a head out of it with his knife. Later on he showed it to his employer. The excavator looked at it grimly for a few moments. Then, remarking that the man was far too clever to be a simple workman on a digging, he discharged him and sent him back to his village.

A few years ago some life-sized alabaster statues of Mykerinos, the builder of the Third Pyramid, were found by the Harvard University Expedition. They had been considerably mutilated, but some of them were put together, and fortunately the heads were but little damaged. The statues showed three periods in the life of Mykerinos: youth, early manhood, and then a rather

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later period. The workmanship was exquisite, and the value of the statues was enormous.

It is safe to say that this discovery has not been lost sight of by the spurious antiquity makers, as alabaster is a soft stone to work in, and offers a fair scope for the exhibition of their talent. I have already been shown a very rough copy in alabaster of what one of these spurious antiquity makers called the features of Mykerinos. Fortunately they presented no resemblance, a fact which I did not impart to him.

CHAPTER IX

PORCELAIN, SERPENTINE AND GRANITE

ON the way to Deir-el-Bahari, a man offered to sell me the small blue vase with a handle shown in Plate X. He asked 25s. for it, but a glance served to show that it was not genuine; the colour was too blue, and the weight of it showed that it was solid, not hollow. This was confirmed by testing it with a hatpin belonging to one of our party, and I proceeded to bargain. Eventually I bought it for 5s. On leaving Deir-el-Bahari, a youth accosted me and offered another small vase, similar to the first one. This I bought for 3s., wrapped it up carefully, placed it in my pocket, and a moment later bent over my saddle and smashed it. However, the first one was safe.

On my return to Luxor I found in an antiquity shop a whole string of them at 2s. each, the proprietor being open to a

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deal. They are made of soft material, *gir*, a kind of native mortar, and will stand very little rough usage.

Most of the porcelain objects are supposed to date from the eighteenth dynasty, but up to the present I have not seen in any museum a genuine antiquity similar to the small blue vase. The possibility is that the Arabs may have one, which they are using as a pattern in the manufacture, or this style might even be a creation of their own.

On the same Plate is a bottle (No. 1), with two handles, and two monkeys sitting on each side of the neck, also made of porcelain; but it has a thick glaze over it, and has been buried for some time in a heap of manure taken from the courtyard of the house, which was fresh enough for active chemical action to take place, and the effect of this is well shown on the bottle.

Nos. 3, 7, and 8 are of the same period, and have a peculiarity common to the previous one also—namely, they are all extremely light in weight, and are made by the same maker.

PORCELAIN, SERPENTINE & GRANITE

No. 2 is a jar with a handle, made of wood and painted. It is partly hollowed out, and the wood is new.

The blue bowl (Plate X, No. 5) is very pretty. It was not made on a wheel, but modelled first and then glazed. The material is a soft brownish gir, or lime mixed with very fine sand. These bowls are very fragile, and are held together by the glaze.



On Plate XI we have some examples of blue porcelain. Nos. 1 and 9 represent the Goddess Taurt, who was usually shown as a hippopotamus, and was supposed to have been the wife of Set.

A sealed jar, made of wood, and painted to represent stone; period, 20th dynasty. It was produced by the same maker as No. 2, Plate X.

No. 2 is an unusual form of jar with rudimentary spout.

No. 3 is a small Anubis figure.

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No. 4 represents a porcelain boat with a ram's head on the bow.

No. 5 is a pectoral which was placed on the chest of the mummy, and should have a scarab in the opening.



A Hawk's Head. The lid of
a canopic jar.

No. 6 is the girdle buckle of Isis, and was placed on the neck of the mummy. It is not correctly shaped and should

not be cut straight off across the bottom.

No. 7 is a small papyrus cup with reeds shown upon it, but very roughly done.

No. 8 is a ram-headed hawk bearing the sun disk; it is composed of soft plaster painted over and very badly shaped.

The above figures would be known as forgeries from the softness of the material used, and from the glaze being too glossy.

The blue canopic jar shown in the frontispiece and the top of another, a hawk's head, represented in the above line engraving,

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were, after prolonged bargaining, bought for 7s. and 6s. each. The seller, an up-river man, took a most solemn oath that they were old, but that the glaze was new. When I pinned him down to definite statements, he explained to me that he meant that the earth of which they were composed was old; which of course is true, but that is not the sense in which the ordinary buyer would understand it. With this reservation he would feel himself at liberty to take the most solemn oaths that, with the exception of the glaze, his specimens were really old.

As I have said, the forgers are now also in the habit of melting the old glass fragments and pieces of glaze, and using it to recolour their productions.

In some of the antiquity shops in Luxor there may be seen cases containing admitted imitations of ancient pottery ware. The prices asked for these imitations are from £1 10s. to £3 each. When I pointed out to the dealer that this was a stiff price to pay for what was an admitted forgery, he

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indignantly denied any intention of fraud, and declared that these objects were artistic in design and execution, and well worth the money he asked for them. One cannot help feeling, however, that should an unwary tourist or an ignorant collector arrive on the scene, it is possible that he might become the possessor of one of these porcelain objects without having any idea that it was not a genuine antiquity.

On Plate XII are shown some very beautiful objects. No. 3 is a winged scarab, which represented the sun crossing the heavens from east to west within a day. It is a fine piece of work, but is made of plaster of Paris and painted.

No. 2 shows a lotus cup, well designed, copied from the original, and made of soft composition, but spoilt in the firing. This, however, gives the effect of age. It is beautifully coloured, and the date is about the eighteenth dynasty. By the side of it is a lotus bowl (No. 1) made by the same maker. These are really charming objects of interest, and are very cleverly made; the



1



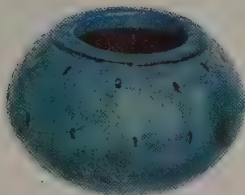
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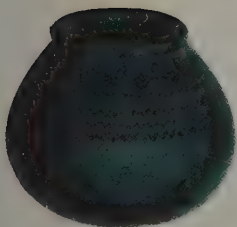
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6



7



8

PORCELAIN, WOOD AND GLASS

1. Bottle with two handles.
2. Wooden jar with handle.
- 3, 7 & 8. Vases made of composition and coloured.
4. A glass figure made to represent Lapis Lazuli.
5. Blue bowl.
6. Blue vase.

PORCELAIN, SERPENTINE & GRANITE

shape, however, is not quite right. Large sums of money were asked for them, but they were purchased for a few shillings each at the end of the season, when the up-river men were anxious to go home to their villages, and did not want to take back any unsold goods with them on their long journey, preferring during the summer to make fresh objects for the next season.

Plate XII. No. 4 is a blue jug having a piece of genuine mummy cloth stuffed in it. It was offered to me at Beir-el-Bahari. The seller asked £1 for it, but after some bargaining I bought it for 5s. It is made of very soft material and irregularly glazed.

No. 5 shows a false-necked bottle. This is a good copy and has also been buried in manure.

Plate XIII. No. 1 is a well-made winged scarab, but the four little figures, 2, 3, 4, 5, representing the sons of Horus, are not correct, as the faces should be those of a man, a dog-faced ape, a jackal, and a hawk; 6 and 8 are poppy heads, of beautiful colour.

No. 7. The egg-shaped object represents

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sacred eyes. It is composed of soft material, is a very exact copy, and must have been most difficult to make.

There is a small blue-and-black porcelain ball also made and sold, but so soft is the material of which they are composed, that I failed to get one home in safety.



Small rough
model of an Ibis,
in Porcelain

Nos. 10 and 13 are two pectorals, one with the Hathor cow represented on it; the smaller one, which is extremely well made, bears the cartouche of Thothmes III., and has fixed upon it, near the top, a piece of an ancient bead—a clever idea and one well calculated to take in the unwary.



Hathor

No. 11 is a blue lotus vase, made of soft material, and unevenly glazed.

No. 12. This small bottle can hardly be called a forgery, and is well described by Wilkinson, who says :

“ Years ago some small bottles, having upon them Chinese inscriptions, were found in some tombs. These were held to estab-



BLUE PORCELAIN.

- 1 & 9. Represent the Goddess Taurt.
 2. Jar with spout.
 3. Anubis figure.
 4. Boat with ram's head.

5. Pectoral.
 6. Buckle of Isis.
 7. Lotus cup.
 8. Ram-headed hawk.

PORCELAIN, SERPENTINE & GRANITE

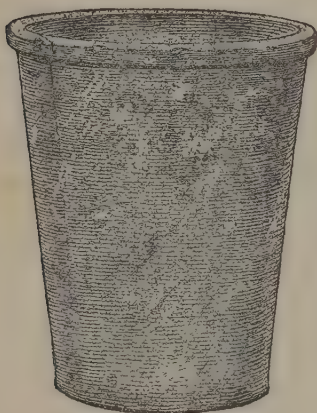
lish a link between China and the ancient Egyptians. It is now known, however, that these bottles are of a comparatively recent period. M. Prisse discovered, by dint of questioning the Arabs of Cairo who were engaged in selling objects of antiquity, that the bottles were never found in tombs, and that the greater part of them came from Tous, Keft, and Kosseir, depôts of commerce with India on the Red Sea. The quality of these bottles is very inferior, and they appear to have been made before the manufacture of porcelain had attained the same degree of perfection in China as in after times. The interpretation of the inscriptions on some of these bottles has been given by Medhurst, and they are verses of poets who flourished in the seventh or eighth centuries A.D.”

The line engraving on page 108 represents a jar made of serpentine. It differs somewhat in shape from the originals, and has been made in two parts and then stuck together. The join is clearly shown in the illustration.

Two years ago I saw four granite bowls

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in a shop at Luxor. They were magnificent specimens, large and beautifully made, and seemed indeed objects to be coveted. The



Jar made of serpentine

price asked was £250 each, or £1000 for the four. At first I looked at them with awe and admiration, but on making a careful examination, I found that they showed none of the small irregularities which are found on the old work, and that their

edges were too clean cut. It seemed as if they must have been made, buried, and forgotten at once, as there were no signs of wear upon them. While handling them I felt sure that they were not genuine, but the work of some very clever sculptor, perhaps an Italian, for many of the latter were employed in working granite at the barrage at Aswan, and they are adepts in the art of working the harder stones.

PORCELAIN, SERPENTINE & GRANITE

Last year I was again in Luxor, and, possessing somewhat more knowledge of antiquities, I called upon the dealer and asked to see the bowls again. He had sold them, but he told me, in a deprecating manner, clasping and unclasping his hands as though the luck had been too great and undeserved, that he had been fortunate enough to get three more, just like them. These he produced, and beautiful specimens indeed they were, but without committing myself too definitely, I should question very much their genuineness. But this man will sell them, as he sold the other four. Some one will buy them and take them to America or England, or some other country, and after a time they will, perhaps, find their way to a museum, where there will be whispered consultations amongst the experts, and queries as to the wisdom of looking a gift horse in the mouth.

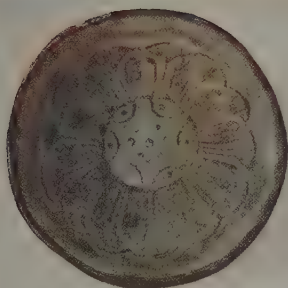
Or it may be that they will adorn a private collection, in which case, sooner or later, some unfortunate Egyptologist will be brought face to face with them, and will

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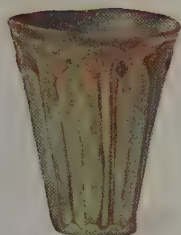
have to make his escape the best way he can.

Think of what it means to this man at Luxor. Out of these seven bowls, he may make, allowing for the cost of producing them, about £1600 profit. He can buy about twelve acres of ground, perhaps more, for this sum. If he farms it himself, he may make as much as £300 a year from this. If he lets it out, preferring to sit in idleness and play the part of a big man, he will find his income increased by about £120 a year through this little transaction. This means that he is a comparatively rich man.

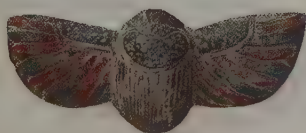
Granite bowls offered for sale by vendors of antiquities are frequently made up of fragments. Perhaps, when the bowl was discovered, a third part of it may have been missing, but a few bits were found from time to time, and these were carefully preserved and put away. On turning over heaps of debris, more bits are found, and when there are sufficient pieces the missing part of the bowl is made up of composition or wax, and the fragments stuck in in such a way as to



1



2



3



4



5

PORCELAIN.

1 & 2. Lotus bowl and cup.
3. Winged scarab.

4. Blue jug with a piece of mummy cloth in it.
5. False-necked bottle.

PORCELAIN, SERPENTINE & GRANITE

reproduce the characteristics of the stone. Then the whole is carefully rubbed with dirt, and set to harden. Later on, a tourist pays £10 or £20 for that which is in part a real antiquity, but in part is only composition.

I remember seeing in a museum two bowls which had fallen to pieces since they had been placed in the case. It was supposed that the influence of the air had caused them to crumble away, but this was not so. They had been made up with wax. The museum authorities had bought them from a dealer, and for years they had stood in the case. Then the wax gave way, and they fell to pieces. Examination with a glass showed mould on the wax.

I have repeatedly been offered similar bowls, and at first I found it difficult to tell which was the made-up part. One way is to engage the seller's attention with something else, and then scratch the suspected part with the finger nail, or some other suitable instrument. It is quite certain that the finger nail will not make an impres-

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sion on granite, so that, if an indentation or a scratch appears, you may be sure that the bowl is made up; but if the material used to make up the bowl is scagliola, it becomes more difficult to tell, and you may require the aid of a powerful magnifying glass before the fraud can be detected.



The Goddess Taurt



BLUE PORCELAIN.

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. A winged scarab. | 9. Chinese bottle. |
| 2, 3, 4 & 5. The four genii. | 10 & 13. Pectorals. |
| 6 & 8. Poppy heads. | 11. Lotus vase. |
| 7. Sacred eyes. | 14. Winged scarab. |

CHAPTER X

MUMMIES AND MUMMY CASES

It may be thought hardly possible that the makers of spurious antiquities could copy the mummies and their cases. And yet there is no doubt that this has been done. In the tale told by Dr. G. A. Reisner in the next chapter, he mentions that in a tomb which had been "faked up," there were coffins and other objects.

Recently a gentleman became possessed with the idea of obtaining a mummy in its case. He spoke of this openly, and on several occasions was warned to be careful, or he would be imposed upon. People rarely thank one, however, for such advice, preferring to believe the smiling, plausible, ready-tongued dragoman or dealer, with whom they are in negotiation. Indeed, sometimes advice given under these circumstances tends to bring about a certain coolness, and the expert may have reason to regret,

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by the loss of cordial relations, that he had ever attempted to save his friend from an act of folly. The gentleman in question desired to present to his native town a mummy in its case, and, though warned, persisted in carrying on the negotiations. Eventually a handsome case, containing what appeared to be a genuine mummy, was submitted to him. The price finally agreed upon was £200. A little later, an Egyptologist saw the case, and without hesitation pronounced it to be a forgery.

The man who sold me the wooden figures seen in Plate III, told me with great glee that he had made mummy cases from bits of old mummy cases and other wood. One he sold to an American for £4, and when, later on, this American showed it to the authorities of a museum, he was at once offered £12 for it. However, he was so pleased with his bargain that he refused the offer.

Plate XIV shows a piece of new wood made up to represent a piece of genuine mummy case.

MUMMIES AND MUMMY CASES

MUMMY CLOTH

The mummy cloth of ancient times was made with the warp and woof of different thicknesses—the warp being thicker than the woof, so that it would hang and fold better. The piece of mummy cloth shown in Plate XV (No. 3) is genuine, but the painting on it has been done recently, as one may be pretty sure from several signs. The painting has been put on with a brush, instead of having the design outlined with a reed and then painted. The colour has run, and shows beyond the edge of the design; and the cloth, being dirty, shows signs of where the paint has wetted it. It may belong to the twenty-second dynasty.

In ancient days the workmanship, however bad or however hastily executed, was always done according to fixed rules, and each line had its meaning.

This year, for the first time, I have seen copies of the long beads for which Egypt is so famous. These are probably made in Venice. The colour is beautiful, and

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mixed with the imitations are a few really old beads. The material used is glass, and can be easily broken between the fingers. The mode of selling these spurious beads is to have them made up in a pattern, and to have genuine beads made up with them. They are manufactured in various colours, but ladies especially admire the blue beads, and the men sell six of the blue colour to one of the other. I bought three lots, made up as seen in the illustration, Plate XV, No. 2. Two were genuine, but the blue one was false. The price I paid was 3*s.* 6*d.* each, and the seller looked at me ruefully, and said, "You have got three pounds' worth of beads there." In the case of the forged blue beads the colour is equal all the way round. The old beads are made of a kind of composition; they are thicker, less regular, and there is usually one part upon which the colour has failed to be equal—that is the side upon which the beads were laid when fired.

No. 1 shows some glass beads supposed to be Roman, but they were made recently in Venice.

MUMMIES AND MUMMY CASES

No. 4 is a string of imitation sacred cats with genuine old beads, used as a necklace.

There is a beautiful story, the humour of which would be spoilt by too searching an inquiry into its authenticity, about what is jokingly called "the predynastic mummy."

The tale opens about the time when the predynastic graves were found in Nubia. There was a great rush on the part of museums all over the world to acquire specimens. It will probably be remembered that the bodies were placed in the graves lying upon one side, the legs drawn up, and one hand placed before the face. They were unembalmed, but the dryness of the climate had given the skin the appearance of light-coloured leather. Around the body were placed a number of jars and rough vessels. As the demand increased, prices rapidly rose. The Arabs vied with a Coptic antiquity dealer in finding and selling the graves, which were then taken whole to the museums. After a time the supply ran short, and the demand became urgent. The natives were hard put

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to it, but with their customary adaptability, they rose to the occasion ; and it is said that they killed their business opponent, the Coptic dealer, and buried his body in the approved position. Under the peculiar climatic conditions obtaining in Nubia, a body often dries before decomposition can take place, so, some time later on, when a special request came from an important museum for a specimen of the predynastic burials, they “discovered” the grave in which they had buried their opponent, and sold the whole thing, pots and all, to the museum. But they could not keep their good fortune to themselves, and later on were heard in the village to boast that they had sold old Aboutig for £450.

The above story is almost too good to spoil, but what really happened, I believe, was that, when the supply of predynastic burials fell short, the natives took a body from a neighbouring cemetery and arranged it in one of the predynastic graves which was minus a body, and later sold the lot.

CHAPTER XI

A FORGED TOMB

I AM indebted to Dr. G. A. Reisner for the following story and incidents, and for others which are incorporated in the earlier chapters of this book.

“It was in the summer of 1902, I think, that a couple of young men from the west bank of the Nile at Thebes visited a dealer in antiquities whose shop is in Luxor. After general conversation, coffee drinking, and so forth, they finally asked the proprietor if he wished to buy any antiquities.

“ ‘Certainly,’ he said, ‘if they are genuine.’

“ ‘Will you believe they are genuine if you see them in position in the tomb in which they were found ? ’ they asked.

“ ‘Yes,’ he replied. ‘Have you got a tomb ? ’

“They said they had, and made arrange-

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ments to take him to it at midnight, two or three nights later.

“When the night and the hour came, they met at the appointed place and proceeded towards the tomb. On the road there was a fierce whispered alarm that the guards were coming, and the party scattered in all directions. The next night a second appointment was made, and this time the party reached the entrance to the tomb. The doorway was blocked up, except for a small hole, and sealed with what seemed to be ancient mud-plaster. They tore down this block and entered the tomb, a large rock-cut chamber, literally filled with antiquities—stelæ, ushebti, coffins, vases, and other objects, apparently covered with the dust of ages.

“The party then adjourned to Luxor to discuss the price. The dealer finally bought the lot for something like £600, and was obliged to raise a mortgage on some property in order to get the money. After great difficulties in avoiding the guards, the objects were finally transferred from the tomb to the dealer’s house in Luxor. The summer



A PIECE OF MUMMY CASE.

This is new wood made up to represent a part of a genuine mummy case.

A FORGED TOMB

passed in pleasant dreams of winter profits, and finally the first Museum buyer arrived on the scene. The dealer selected a stone from the purchased lot, and carried it round to the house of a friend where the Egyptologist happened to be engaged in negotiations for the purchase of some antiquities. The dealer called his friend to the door, and asked him to show the stelæ to the buyer. His friend smiled and said, 'It is a forgery.'

"The dealer laughed in derision, and insisted on the stone being shown to the expert, who took one look at it and said, 'Rank forgery.'

"The dealer, who had found this in what seemed to be an untouched tomb, now became thoroughly alarmed. At his request, his friend and the Egyptologist went to his house to inspect all the objects from the tomb. They were all forgeries, and the dealer had been swindled out of his £600 by a cleverly-planned trick of the west bank forgers."

The Egyptians who are engaged in the

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making of spurious antiquities are now specialising. One man in Luxor has perfected the manufacture of glazed or faience vessels. Another at Qeneh has developed the cutting and inscription of stone scarabs. At Aboutig a forger makes woodwork and carved ivories, and somewhere in Egypt they are making stone vessels of all periods, apparently on a steam lathe, but copying the ancient forms with great success. A dealer in Cairo once showed me an enormous head of Amenemhat III., which he said was offered to him as coming from Tanis. This must have been the work of European stone-masons. It was cut from a single large boulder of sandstone, an exact copy of the existing portraits of that king, but the cutting had been done with modern stone-masons' tools, the marks of which were plainly visible, even without a glass.

“On another occasion,” Dr. Reisner tells us, “I was once looking through the stock of a dealer, now dead. Suddenly I caught sight in the back of a drawer of what appeared to be a Babylonian object. The dealer,

A FORGED TOMB

who happened to know that I have some knowledge of Babylonian antiquities, was very reluctant to show me the object, protesting openly that it was a forgery. I persuaded him, however, and he produced a dozen or more very beautifully made Babylonian sculptures, but all perfectly impossible. He said that he received them from a Persian, an agent who came through Cairo every year, and left him a certain number of pieces to sell on commission. I tried to buy one of these pieces, offering even as high as £5 for it, against the £40 he demanded, but he refused. When I came back in the spring, he told me with a grin that he had sold them all at his own price to various travellers.

“I afterwards learned the forger’s name, and that he lived in Baghdad, from an excavator who had been working in Mesopotamia. This man also forged cuneiform tablets, and I have seen examples of his work in other shops in Cairo besides the one I have mentioned. He first began his forgery of the cuneiform tablets by making moulds of the

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two sides, pressing clay into the moulds and sticking the two halves together before baking. These forgeries were always discernible by the shallowness of the little wedges of which the writing is composed. This seems to have been pointed out to him, for after a time he began going over these tablets with a pointed stick before baking, and thus deepening the wedges. Finally, with the practice thus gained, he even went so far as to copy tablets freehand; and I know of at least one large tablet in a European museum which he made freehand without any tablet to copy from. It has all the appearance of one of the great tablets from the temple at Telloh, but the writing has no meaning."

CHAPTER XII

THE MAKERS AND SELLERS OF FORGED ANTIQUITIES

As I have already said, the majority of the makers of forged antiquities are to be found among the very adaptable "up-river men."

At Qus lives the maker of gold reproductions. Most of the wooden forgeries come from Gurna and the scarabs from Luxor. In the villages near to Deir-el-Bahari are made the porcelain vases and figures, whence come also the stone heads and statuettes. A number of composition figures are made in the Delta, and may be met with at Zagazig and Benha.

A few years ago the forgers used to make and sell their own work, but now that they are becoming rich and rising in the social scale they are content to leave the selling part of the business to others and themselves stay at home to carry on the making of further imitations.

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In appearance they are tall, broad-shouldered men with keen, clever faces and long soft fingers, direct descendants of the ancient Egyptians, with very dark skins, thin lips and persuasive manners.

One member of the family usually leaves his village in the month of October, and with his bundles of carefully wrapped up reproductions drifts lazily down the Nile on a trading boat. Arrived at Cairo, he takes up his quarters with a friend, and the next day may be seen in one of the principal streets with his hands full of strings of beads and his pockets bulging with some of the results of the summer's work.

Dressed in a dark blue galabeyah, with a white turban and red slippers, he makes an imposing figure. He has a smattering of various languages, in which "Real anticass, gentleman," looms large. Also he has an intimate knowledge of the various coinages and generally manages to come out on the right side in making a deal—at least, I never heard of one who owned to the contrary. He possesses largely the gift of

MAKERS AND SELLERS

perseverance and is like a sleuth-hound in tracking down a possible purchaser. In this he is assisted by the bowabs and servants, many of whom are his own blood-relations or friends.

It must be remembered that most of the servants in Egypt are Berberines, from Nubia, and as the cultivable land up the Nile is in places reduced to a few hundred yards, and travelling by boat is cheap, it will be seen that the men can easily get to know each other well even though miles of the Nile waterway may separate the villages.

But the "up-river man" is not the only itinerant seller of antiquities. A donkey boy may have found out that he can make more money by selling antīcas to his patrons than he can by running after his donkey, even though the bakshīsh be included; so he ponders over this until it becomes an obsession and fills his thoughts day and night. No longer will he remain a donkey boy, he determines; he has a good arbeyah or cloak and decent slippers, and a long

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black cloak will hide a multitude of unwashedness.

Visions of untold wealth spread themselves out before him. A man he has heard of got £12,000 for a papyrus, and £40 for a gold-mounted scarab is an ordinary price. By a merciful dispensation, Allah has given the Nazarenes into the hands of the Faithful. So he chooses riches ; for, after all, money means strength and honour in his village, and perhaps—who knows ?—one or more wives who will be beautiful as the houris of Paradise of whom he heard the Mullah discourse in the mosque only the last Friday. The prospect is dazzling and fills the boy's brain. Rich and powerful, men will look up to him with respect, he will possess feddans of land and children will rise up around him.

He clasps his hands and looks at a donkey distastefully. Did he ever run miles across the desert behind such uncleanness ? Why, even Allah had named it “ ass,” which means, as he has been told, “ a fool ” in the language of those who buy antīcas. Why

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had he slumbered and why had his eyes been shut in the past? Here was wealth, only waiting for him to seize it. It was not too late; he would force fortune to come to him.

So thinking, the boy sat gazing with unseeing eyes at the scene before him. Girls passed and giggled. "He hath seen an Afrit," said one. "Nay, a woman hath cast her eyes on him," said another. He heard and frowned, then bending forward, took up a stone and threw it at a passing dog. The yelp of pain brought him back from the dream world. His resolve was taken; he would become an antica-seller and, "Inshallah," might perhaps reap fortune at one swoop.

So the plunge is taken, the summer is spent in gathering together his materials and arranging to sell for others on commission; and the following season the erstwhile donkey boy, his pockets bulging with small tin boxes containing his wares, haunts the neighbourhood of the hotels where live the buyers of antiquities.

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Genuine antiquities are few and not to be had without considerable outlay, so in the boxes mixed with the real fragments lie the imitations.

It was just such a boy as this who came to my notice some years ago, and one day I saw him arrested by the police and conveyed to the Caracol (police station). Upon making inquiries I was informed that he had been taken up for annoying people by pestering them to buy scarabs. Later in the day I saw him leaning disconsolately against a wall outside the Caracol.

“ Well, how much have you to pay ? ” I asked.

“ Fifteen piastres ” (about three shillings), was his reply. “ Or ”—and he shrugged his shoulders—“ or I stay three days in prison.”

“ Have you paid the money ? ”

“ No.”

“ Why not ? ”

“ I have none.”

Now this was untrue, for, otherwise, how could he give change to purchasers?—and

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these boys will rarely risk losing a sale for the want of change. This I pointed out to him, and spoke of the shame, but he shook his head obstinately. Prison has no taint for these men, it is merely an incident in the day's work. On the following morning, when he was to surrender, I saw him again, his pockets no longer bulging, his clothes clean washed, his cloak brushed, and wearing his new red slippers. He was going to prison.

Calling him to me, I handed over the amount of the fine, saying, "Go and pay it at once and get to work again." The boy looked sullenly at the three shillings; it was a lot of money to give to the prison authorities, and that was not the way to get rich. Then he saluted and walked away.

After three days he returned and asked to see me. Solemnly he produced a piece of dirty rag, untied it, and handed me back the three shillings.

"What is this?" I asked.

The boy grinned. "Well you see, sir, when I got to the prison, the officer who takes the money had gone away. I waited

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there for one day, and then he came back. When I pay the money I give him two shillings, but he look at a paper and say 'Three.' I say 'No; three shillings or three days in prison. You were away when I come. I stop here one day, and here are two shillings.' He say, 'No, three.' Then I wrap up the money and stay two more days in prison; after that I come out, and here is your money."

Obviously there was only one thing to be done, and he departed with a broad smile and the conviction that he had done a good day's work. One cannot help feeling that such a boy ought to succeed.

On another occasion I saw the same youth strolling about his village when I knew that he should have been in prison for a contravention of the law. Calling him, I inquired how this came about.

"I have business in my village," he said, "so my brother he come to the prison and take my place. I give the policeman one shilling, I come out to do my business, then go back again."

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Let me say that this took place years ago, and I do not think he would get out of prison so easily now; but even quite recently I heard of a sale of antiquities running into hundreds of pounds, one of the parties to the transaction being in prison at the time.

Then there are the more prosperous sellers with their feet firmly set in the path to fortune, who combine the selling of forged antiquities with dealings in the real articles. Sometimes a dragoman varies his legitimate business by bringing before the notice of his party antiquities which he declares are genuine, or introduces a seller, who at the conclusion of the bargain hands over to the dragoman a fair percentage of the spoils. His part in the transaction may be limited to the introduction of the seller and the assurance that "This man very good man, dig in the tombs, lady. Don't be afraid, he very honest."

Lastly there is the polished seller, tired of mien, suave of manner and high in price,

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producing only upon pressure his store of treasures. Apparently casual about selling anything, he is probably the most dangerous, for if no business is done, one leaves him feeling very mean, and conscious of having committed an offence in doubting the authenticity of the articles shown by him.

Nor does the silence of your guide on the way home tend to relieve the feeling of oppression and smallness, until perhaps by some good fortune one meets a man who knows ; then the feeling changes to one of relief at the escape and wrathfulness at the attempt that has been made to swindle you.

CHAPTER XIII

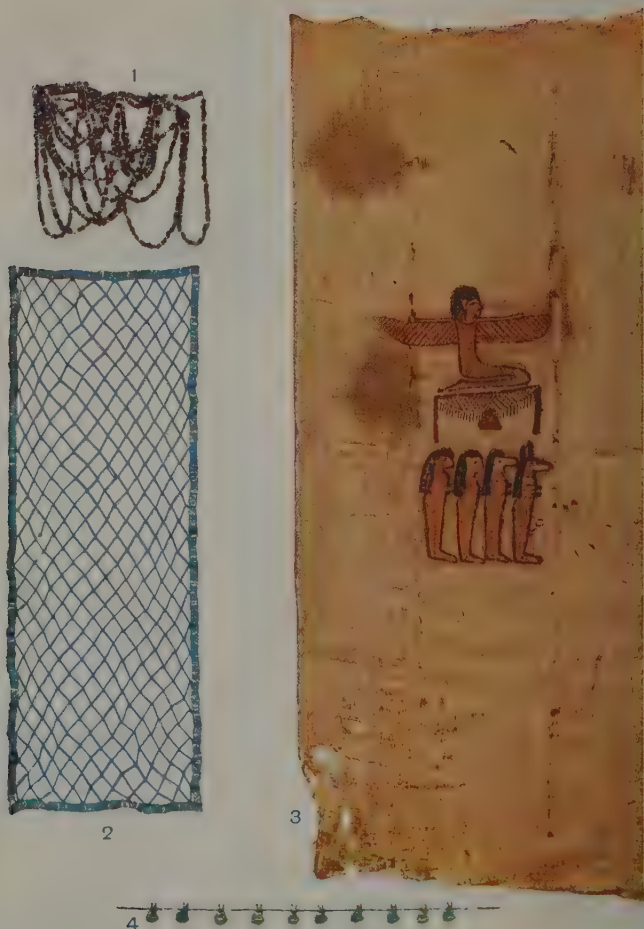
EGYPTOLOGISTS

It would not, perhaps, be out of place to make some special reference to the men who are doing so much to throw light upon the thoughts and lives of the old Egyptians ; but here is need to tread as warily as may be, for these are a race apart. Charming companions they are, delightful hosts, brilliant guests, generous and painstaking to a degree when once you have presented your card and asked to be shown around. So clever are they that after a time one learns wisdom, and refrains from advancing theories in their presence as to how the old Egyptians cut and worked their diorite, granite, and other hard stones : what lights they used when making and painting the tombs in the Valley of the Kings : or what system of mechanics they employed in raising blocks of stone weighing many tons to the tops of the Pyramids, 480 feet up : if it was an

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inclined plane, cradles, or levers, or what it was ? These men have seen many workmen hard put to it to pull a small granite statue weighing three or four tons up an inclined plane of less than 45 degrees. And yet what wonderful patience and courtesy most of these experts show to well-meaning but ignorant questioners, even when they are perhaps burning to be free to turn back more pages of hidden history.

There is something about them which seems strange to new-comers. Perhaps, indeed probably, it is the inhalation and absorption of the desiccated and pulverised remains of the ancient Egyptians which influences them. Every one knows that the dust from tombs produces irritation of the air passages, and possibly this also accounts for the divergence of opinion among them ; for never yet have I known two Egyptologists agree absolutely upon a given subject. I have heard a story that two savants read an inscription, the one beginning from right to left, and the other from left to right, and both made sense of it.



BEADS AND MUMMY CLOTH.

1. Forged Roman beads.
2. Egyptian blue beads.
3. Genuine mummy cloth recently painted
4. Sacred cats, with genuine mummy beads.

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I was somewhat surprised recently by the remarks of a learned friend to me.

“ You are getting more and more like an Egyptian. I notice the change every time I see you,” he said. It may be so, although the idea is startling. We know that Continents produce types, of which fact a good example is America. Then add to this the daily dose of ancient Egyptian remains, and the mystery is one no longer, but the effect becomes possible if not probable. Among the savants some of the old characteristics reappear to-day. Listen to the speech of Amenemhat to his son, Sesostris, during the twelfth dynasty.

“ Hearken to that which I say to thee,
That thou mayest be King of the earth,
That thou mayest be ruler of the lands,
That thou mayest increase good.
Harden thyself against all subordinates ;
The people give heed to him who
 terrorises them ;
Approach them not alone.
Fill not thy heart with a brother ;

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Know not a friend,
Nor make for thyself intimates,
Wherein there is no end.
When thou sleepest, guard for thyself
thine own heart,
For a man has no people
In the day of evil.
I gave to the beggar ;
I nourished the orphan ;
I admitted the insignificant,
As well as him who was of great account.
But he who ate my food made insurrection ;
He to whom I gave my hand aroused fear
therein." (*Breasted.*)

The spirit of these sayings creeps into the work, and excavators may be trusted to keep their own counsel. They will take immense trouble and pains in their explanations, and endeavour to render into popular language the hieroglyphics, and the meanings of the dead past ; but let the ignorant only intrude upon a piece of their sacred earth, and "ice is not in it with them." Once, while going through some excavations, a

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friend pointed out a small blue bead lying on the top of one of the low mud walls which separate tomb from tomb. "Shall I steal it?" he asked. Knowing the ways of excavators, I whispered a warning, "Better not." A few steps further on the excavator turned round and explained pointedly, "Every article found in the diggings is taken note of; even a small bead" (here he paused, and we felt uncomfortable) "is placed on the top of the wall near where it was found, and is catalogued in its turn." After this little admonition upon righteousness, we walked thoughtfully along, and my friend edged up to me. "Good job I did not steal it," he whispered. "I am perfectly certain he" (indicating the excavator) "did not hear what I said to you, unless he has ears as well as eyes in the back of his head."

Excavators are, as a rule, extremely good judges of humanity. They know that an ancient predatory instinct is present in most people of the Anglo-Saxon race, and who knows how many short lectures on

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honesty that one small blue bead gave rise to. But even excavators, or perhaps it is more correct to say some of them, have their failings. They are apt to look down from an immense height upon an amateur digger as something too ignorant for words; and a pained look comes over their faces when you mention the work done by So-and-so, and the conclusions to which he has come. "What is the country coming to?" their expression seems to say.

But the excavators have their trials too. Sometimes a digger has been working for weeks at some deep burial pit. Suppose now that "something" has been found. Perhaps a door is about to be opened. At the critical moment, some tourists appear on the scene. The unearthing or opening must stop, for who knows what may be found, and the greatest care must be taken to get full notes and photographic records, that nothing may be lost. The afternoon passes, and night begins to come on. It is too late now to open the find, it must wait, strongly guarded from thieves, till to-morrow; and the ex-

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cavator passes an uneasy night, pondering and wondering what he will find, and saying evil things about those who hindered him in his work.

I have been in the habit of showing my forged antiquities to Egyptologists, not bumptiously, but humbly, and with a due knowledge of my own colossal ignorance. The specimen would be passed across the table in silence, accompanied by a magnifying glass. The expert would frown heavily, but the specimen and the glass would, in the end, prove irresistible. As I produced scarabs made more perfect, a certain uneasiness would be shown, and the question asked me, "Is this genuine or not?" To this I would never reply otherwise than to say, "I should be glad to have your opinion on the matter." A very careful examination of the specimen would follow, and the reasons for considering it to be a forgery would be explained in terse plain language.

There is a certain disadvantage in collecting spurious antiquities and getting expressions of opinion upon them; for after a

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time your association with these forgeries causes an inclination in the expert to condemn off-hand any specimen you may submit to him. To meet this occasionally I would hand over a genuine scarab, which would be detected, and inquiry made as to "what I was up to now, or whether I had really bought this as a fraudulent antiquity?" Occasionally remarks would be pointed, and expressed in the bluff way which "hides a heart of gold." This I always accepted humbly, conscious of my own inferiority.

These experts were goodness itself, and would spend hours over a close examination of a specimen submitted to them. On one occasion, when showing the figure seen on page 54, the excavator demanded "where on earth" I had obtained it? Filled with the spirit of mischief, I refused to answer, but dropped vague hints about black granite statues, life size; at which he turned round, saying crossly, "Really, I believe you are in league with every disreputable person in the country." Modestly I disclaimed this, and pointed out that I was actuated

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simply and solely by a zeal for science. I asked him if he would be kind enough to read the inscription upon the tablet before him. This he was unable to do himself, but he made a copy which he took away for a friend to read. Day after day went past, and the translation did not arrive. After about a week or ten days, I reminded him, but for some reason or other, the translation was not forthcoming. Weeks after, I learnt that my friend had been afraid to hand the inscription to the man whom he knew could read it, lest it should be a further trick on my part, and should contain nothing more than a message of thanks from a grateful patient.

On another occasion I made an experiment as to whether my association with modern forged antiquities would be sufficient to bias an expert in expressing his opinion as to the genuineness of articles of known antiquity submitted to him.

I obtained four specimens (*see* Plate XVI), of undoubted antiquity, although even these

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are examples made in or for Nubia about 3500 years ago of Egyptian Funerary objects of New Empire period (reign of Thothmes III).

The largest scarab is of very poor workmanship. The head, which took the unusual form of a sphinx, was badly made and proportioned, and was turned slightly to one side. The workmanship of the smaller scarab was also poor. The sacred eye was well made, of a beautiful blue, and looked as if it had only just left the workshop. The monkey was one of the most startling things I have ever seen found in an excavation in Egypt. The glaze was modern and the whole thing looked as if it had recently come out of a cheap bazaar. But there can be no question about the authenticity of these things, for they were found and taken out of the graves by the archæologists of the Nubian Survey.

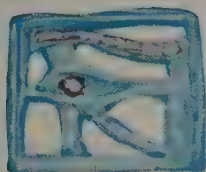
On the mantelpiece of a house in Egypt stood a cheap ornament. This appears in No. 2, side by side with the monkey found in Nubia. The ancient specimen is much the better work, but the likeness between



1



2



3



4



5



6

EXAMPLES FOUND IN NUBIA.

- 1 & 6 A steatite monkey made 3,500 years ago.
2 Cheap ornament made five years ago.
3 Sacred eye of beautiful colour.
4 & 5 Scarabs.

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the two is so strong as to be absolutely bewildering.

[When the ancient monkey vase was first found it was shown to an eminent Egyptologist, not in the ordinary way as a valuable antiquity, but a few matches were placed in it (*see* No. 6), and it was put quietly upon the table in front of him in the evening when the party were smoking. However, he was not to be taken in, but at once recognised it as a valuable *antica*.]

Entering casually into conversation with my friend, I led up to the subject of antiquities. He was expressing his views freely, and I waited patiently. During a pause I slipped my hand into my pocket, brought out one of the specimens and pushed it across the table towards him. A scornful smile came over his face. "One of your forgeries, I suppose," he remarked. I said, "I should like to have your opinion on the object." He examined it carefully, and then laid it down. I passed another across to him, and then the remaining two. One by one he discarded

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them, giving it as his opinion that the large scarab was a forgery for the following very sound reasons, bearing in mind the excellence of the old Egyptians' work. The inscription, he said, was not very well done : the two holes on the side were not usual in heart scarabs : the head was badly made and turned to one side ; the work on the feet was clumsy. The small scarab he classed as imitation for the following reasons. The two antelopes are supposed to be alike, but one is larger than the other, and has a larger neck and ears. The branches of a tree over the back of the antelopes were irregular in size, one being small and one large. A round eye appears on the under surface of the scarab, which should have had a duplicate on the opposite side. The back and head, he decided, were very good.

The monkey, which was shown to him with a few matches placed in the receptacle before it, was declared to be a shameless fraud, and he wondered that I should take up my time in collecting such obvious

imitations. When he was shown the photograph which had been taken of a common vase from the mantelpiece of a house, and compared it with the specimen he was examining, he sarcastically inquired if I bought all my antiquities in a cheap Jack's booth at home. Meekly I produced the sacred eye, which he would scarcely deign to look at, contemptuously pushing it aside on account of a small white mark in the blue. "Have you got any more?" he inquired. Modestly I said that I had not, when, with some muttered remarks about the strangeness of the pursuits taken up by people with more time on their hands than sense, he strode away.

There had gathered round us a little silent group of listeners who seemed rather to sympathise with me, although, of course, thinking that I had brought all this upon myself.

Presently one of these bystanders said: "Does not a monkey appear in Plate 72, Vol. I., of the 'Archæological Survey of Nubia?' " There was a dead silence, and

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many inquiring eyes were turned upon me. I said, "That is so." Then another man said, "It is described as a steatite monkey holding a kohl pot, for I remember reading it with great interest. And the sacred eye is shown in Plate 79, Vol. I." Now the interest became intense, and smiles began to appear on the faces of the bystanders. It was all true. The small scarab is shown in the second volume, and the large scarab is illustrated in the second report of the "Archæological Survey of Nubia."

It was, perhaps, an unkind experiment to make, but yet it was necessary to know whether one's association with admitted forgeries were sufficient to bias the mind of a clever man in giving his opinion on specimens submitted to him.

Ten years ago, when discussing with an eminent excavator the excellence of the fourth dynasty work, I said: "Here we have the climax, so to speak, of Egyptian culture—the period of the Great Pyramid of Cheops, which is so marvellous for the mathematical exactitude with which it is built. But where

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are the evidences of the evolution which preceded this period, the time when they were trying their dawning ideas? No architect would have dared offer to build Cheops a pyramid, the base of which should be thirteen acres in extent and 480 feet in height, were he not absolutely certain of his ability to overcome those mathematical and mechanical difficulties which would be met with in lifting heavy blocks of stone 480 feet. And then the sides face due North and South, East and West. Where is the period of evolution which preceded this excellence? ”

The excavator's reply was startling. “ I do not believe that there was one,” he said. “ The demand was made and met : the same would be the case to-day if a similar need arose.”

Perhaps this explains why Egyptians, without preliminary tuition in sculpture or painting, are copying the old work in such a way that only the most experienced are able to tell the real from the false.

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Most excavators, however, have a sense of intuition which tells them if a thing is false or not. Not that they depend in any way upon this, for they weigh up the evidence in a strictly scientific manner, and give their decision backed up by reasons which are difficult to dispute.

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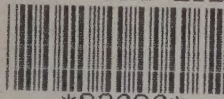
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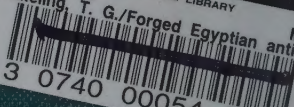
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